

RESOURCE 6: ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ALLIED HEALTH RURAL GENERALIST PATHWAY STRATEGY

OVERVIEW

This document articulates the roles and responsibilities associated with the Allied Health Rural Generalist Pathway (AHRGP) strategy including the multi-jurisdictional trial of Allied Health Rural Generalist Training Positions (AHRG Training Positions), including:

- Employing organisations
- AHRG Training Position holders
- Local supervisors and managers of the AHRG Training Position holders
- Commissioning agencies (where relevant)
- Service for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH)

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION THE AHRGP

The AHRGP strategy is a multi-jurisdictional partnership of health services collaborating on the development and trial of the rural generalist workforce and employment structures, education and training and service models. The strategy has limited coordination and reporting requirements for collaborators.

There is currently not a central source of funding to support implementation of the strategy across sectors. From 2022-2024 SARRAH, with support from the Federal Government, is offering The Allied Health Rural Generalist Education and Training Scheme (TAHRGETS) to support private organisations and NGOs employing rural and remote allied health workers to implement the AHRGP. Health services outside of this program that are interested in collaborating on the ongoing development of the AHRGP can contribute to implementing key components of the strategy, including:

- 1) AHRG Training Positions; and
- 2) Rural generalist education programs

AHRG Training Positions are generally developed and implemented using an organisation's own resources. This may be through identifying and redesigning positions that have been difficult to recruit, allocating development funding or seeking new funding to support implementation of the AHRGP.

The core features of AHRG Training Positions focus on workforce / employment structures, service development projects, and formal education / training. These core features have been trialled and evaluated and are essential to successfully implementing the AHRGP. Beyond the core features, AHRG Training Positions can be designed to meet the needs of the organisation and the local service environment.

All AHRG Training Positions must participate in a formal, post-graduate education program in rural generalist practice. James Cook University (JCU) in collaboration with the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) delivers a three-level rural generalist education program. Participants can complete Level 1 (Graduate /early career module-based, work integrated program) or Level 2 (Graduate Diploma) or both. The recent addition of the master program for commencement in 2023 could also be considered for more experienced clinicians as a more advanced level course.

It is expected that additional education providers will develop other rural generalist education programs as demand increases for allied health rural generalist education and training and following the establishment of the Allied Health Rural Generalist Accreditation Council.



ROLE OF THE EMPLOYING ORGANISATION

The role of an employing organisation developing and managing an AHRG Training Position is to implement appropriate workforce and governance structures to support the AHRG Training Position holder to:

- Complete a rural generalist education program; and
- Contribute to generating sustainable change to the local service model that achieves benefits for the community.

A health service collaborating in the strategy can:

- Create one or more AHRG Training Positions that fulfil all the specified requirements of such a role in one or more of the following professions: medical imaging, nutrition and dietetics, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry, speech pathology, psychology and social work. Additional profession-specific training options are expected to become available as the strategy continues to develop. Positions may be created through new funding, or the rural generalist training function may be designated for an existing role.
- Implement appropriate clinical and professional governance for the AHRG Training Position, which for graduates should include formal supervision by a co-located and/or highly accessible profession-specific supervisor, appropriate to the experience level of the position holder.
- Support the scoping, development, implementation and evaluation of one or more rural generalist service development projects e.g. telehealth, delegation, extended scope including skill sharing or new generalist services.
- Participate in the continued development of rural generalist education programs in collaboration with health sector partners.

ROLE OF THE AHRG TRAINING POSITION HOLDER

The individual employed in the AHRG Training Position will undertake a rural generalist education program. The education program includes university-delivered and work-integrated learning as well as formal assessment processes. The position holder will also participate in the requirements of the program including supervision and rural generalist service development projects. In all other respects the services provided by an individual should be consistent with other positions of the same level and function in the organisation.

ROLE OF THE LOCAL SUPERVISOR AND MANAGER OF THE AHRG TRAINING POSITION

The local profession-specific supervisor and the position's operational manager will be responsible for supporting the AHRG Training Position incumbent to select and tailor their training to the local setting and service needs. They will also be responsible for supporting the AHRG Training Position incumbent to apply their learning from the rural generalist education program in practice in the local service.

The profession-specific supervisor will participate in formal supervision of the AHRG Training Position incumbent and contribute to clinical governance and support of the rural generalist education program at the local level.

The manager will be responsible for monitoring progress and facilitating supporting processes such as timely approval of development funding.

The local supervisor and manager will have a key role in selecting, supporting and progressing the rural generalist service development project. This includes local sponsorship and facilitation of the project.

ROLE OF AN AGENCY COMMISSIONING OR FUNDING AN AHRG TRAINING POSITION

The role of a commissioning / funding agent will be to influence the readiness of the health system to accommodate the AHRG Training Position incumbents as well as those who complete the development pathway in future. By understanding the capacity of those completing the rural generalist education program and development pathway, commissioning agents can support

workforce reform and drive service changes that respond to the needs of rural and remote communities.

ROLE OF SERVICES FOR AUSTRALIAN RURAL AND REMOTE ALLIED HEALTH

SARRAH will support collaboration, information sharing and advocacy for the AHRGP strategy, including the AHRG Training Positions and rural generalist education programs by:

- Promoting, advocating and providing practical support to drive the national implementation of the AHRGP across multiple jurisdictions.
- Supporting the ongoing activities of the AHRGP Project Governance Group which informs the strategic development of the AHRGP.
- Coordinating engagement across the health sector and with relevant stakeholders, including commissioning agencies and health service providers, for the development of the education programs.
- Providing information that allows healthcare providers to identify opportunities, and develop and implement AHRG Training Positions.
- Exploring local, jurisdictional and federal funding models and opportunities to support the viability of the pathway, including the workforce and education components.
- Coordinating the establishment of the Allied Health Rural Generalist Accreditation Council to assess allied health rural generalist education programs and working with education providers to expand available training offerings.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Allied Health Rural Generalist Pathway is a collaborative initiative comprising a broad variety of organisations across the Australian and New Zealand healthcare sectors. The full list of organisations is available on the SARRAH website at www.sarrah.org.au.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Resources relevant to AHRG Training Positions and the Rural Generalist Program are available through SARRAH at www.sarrah.org.au. SARRAH can provide advice to healthcare providers, commissioning agencies and other stakeholders to support scoping, development and implementation of the AHRGP.