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Major rural health hubs at Notre Dame set to transform regional communities

Major new rural training hubs at The University of Notre Dame Australia are set to transform regional health care by increasing training opportunities for nursing, midwifery, medical, and allied health students and professionals in Broome (WA) and Wagga Wagga (NSW).

Notre Dame will lead a consortium of universities to establish the Kimberley University Department of Rural Health (KUDRH) on the Broome Campus, as well as the Riverina Rural Training Hub (RRTH) at the University's Rural Clinical School in Wagga Wagga, as part of a \$54.4 million Federal Government initiative announced on Thursday 13 April 2017.

Both initiatives will provide a significant boost for the provision of health care in areas of most need, ensuring that health students and professionals have a greater opportunity to live, study and work in regional WA and NSW.

Notre Dame's KUDRH, which is due to commence operation in 2018, will provide training and undertake research focused on advancing health outcomes for Aboriginal and rural people. It will provide high quality health training and support in the Kimberley through a range of activities including the following:

- collaboration with primary health networks and Aboriginal health organisations to implement a model of support assisting and empowering undergraduate students to study and return to work in the Kimberley;
- increasing community and student-led rural clinical placements;
- transition support to rural and remote practices for those new to the Kimberley;
- professional development opportunities for the existing workforce; and
- increased research relating to rural and remote health and inter-professional practice.

Professor Juli Coffin, Head of Notre Dame's Broome Campus, welcomed the announcement: "the Federal Government has recognised the need for a multidisciplinary health training hub in the Kimberley to meet the region's growing demands for highly skilled allied health professionals," she said.

"It will not only provide greater access for students in an Indigenous health context, but also a rich personal and professional experience that you can't find anywhere else in Australia."

Working alongside Notre Dame's School of Medicine, Sydney, the RRTH will enable the following:

- collaboration with key community, health and education stakeholders in NSW;
- establishment of clinical training pathways to enable medical graduates to complete their postgraduate training regionally;
- identification and support of suitable student and postgraduate trainees with an interest in rural practice; and
- development of regional training capacity.

"We are excited that Notre Dame will have an important role in facilitating the advanced training of medical graduates through the new Riverina Regional Hub. Fostering opportunities for specialty training in the Riverina will support new doctors with a continuous and complete training pathway enabling them to live and work in the region over the long term," Professor Christine Bennett, Dean of the School of Medicine, Sydney, said.



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Media Release



Notre Dame Vice Chancellor, Professor Celia Hammond said the University was delighted to receive funding to establish both the KUDRH and RRTH.

“We are confident they will make a difference to addressing health workforce shortages and needs within regional WA and NSW, and continue our long standing commitment and presence in those regions and communities,” Professor Hammond said.

Ends

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Caption: The University of Notre Dame Australia is the beneficiary of Federal Government funding to establish the Kimberley University Department of Rural Health on the Broome Campus, as well as the Riverina Rural Training Hub (RRTH) at the University’s Rural Clinical School in Wagga Wagga.



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