



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
A U S T R A L I A

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Notre Dame addresses critical OT shortage

The University of Notre Dame Australia is addressing the critical shortage of occupational therapists in remote and regional communities, launching a unique program focused on rural health and evidence-based practice.

Notre Dame has welcomed its first Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (Honours) students in Sydney – a move that will help tackle soaring demand and burnout in the industry.

The program aims specifically to equip our future occupational therapists with the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to work and live in rural and remote areas.

This is partly achieved through the core curriculum learning activities, including volunteer experiences and rural and remote placements supported by experienced mentors.

Head of Discipline, Professor Tawanda Machingura, said Notre Dame's program was unique because it seamlessly incorporated the University's objects and values into the curriculum, teaching students to be grounded in both evidence and compassion.

"Since its inception, Notre Dame has forged a reputation of building the care economy," he said. "We continue to punch above our weight when it comes to responding to the emerging and ongoing health needs of Australians.

"We have launched our new occupational therapy course at a critical time in the field, when we are experiencing a workforce shortage driven by factors such as our ageing population and the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

"This shortage is evident on a national level, but it is felt most acutely in rural areas."

Occupational therapists play an important role in improving the health and wellbeing of Australians, helping people with mental, physical and developmental issues to participate in their activities of daily life.

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