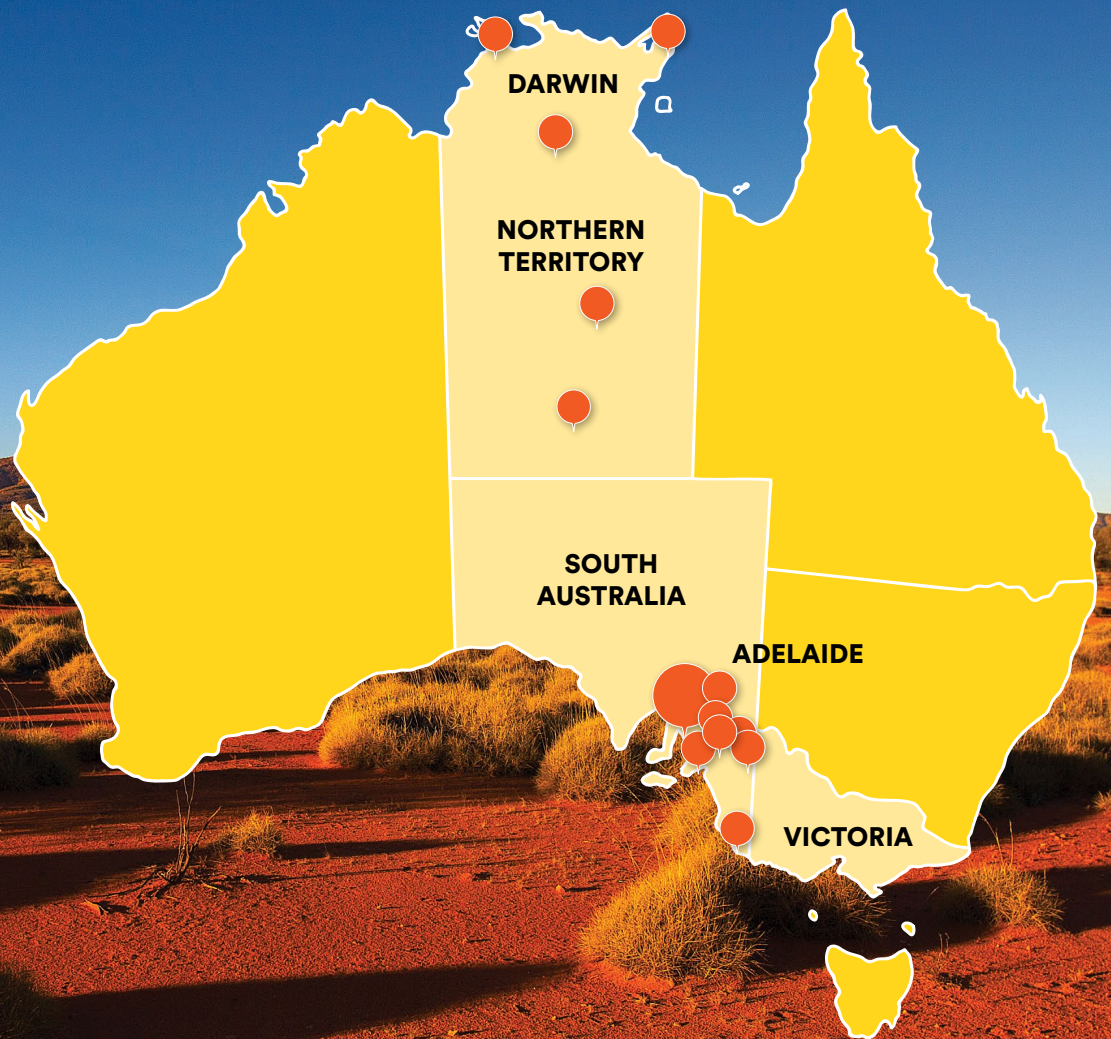


Rural and Remote Health

South Australia and Northern Territory



Flinders University has a considerable presence in rural and remote communities throughout South Australia and the Northern Territory.

This geographic footprint across the Australian Central Corridor is a defining feature of Flinders University. Our regional academic programs and research positively impact some of the most diverse and culturally rich communities in Australia. Many activities are supported by funding from the Australian Government through the Commonwealth Department of Health Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) Program.

Flinders University acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters on which its campuses are located, these are the Traditional Lands of the Arrernte, Dagoman, First Nations of the South-East, First Peoples of the River Murray & Mallee region, Jawoyn, Kaurna, Larrakia, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Ramindjeri, Warumungu, Wardaman and Yolngu people. We honour their Elders past, present and emerging.

South Australia

Our Flinders Rural and Remote Health SA campuses are located in:

- Mt. Gambier
- Victor Harbor
- Murray Bridge
- Barossa
- Renmark
- Berri

We facilitate medical, nursing and allied health student placements in some of the more remote regions of South Australia, including Cooper Pedy, Roxby and Ceduna.

Flinders Rural and Remote Health in SA facilitates high quality multidisciplinary health education and research across rural communities in South Australia including the Doctor of Medicine Rural Stream (MDRS) program, Regional Training Hub, interprofessional placements program, and the Rural Junior Doctor Program.

Rural Medicine in South Australia

Flinders offers rural and remote placements and rural-located study options for medical students across the four years of the medical program with the goal of increasing the number of graduates who choose a career as a rural doctor. Students learn in place at a range of affiliated rural health care facilities including hospitals, community outreach agencies, Aboriginal medical services, prisons and health centres.

Doctor of Medicine Rural Stream (MDRS) program

Approximately 40 Doctor of Medicine students have the option to spend their entire third year in a rural community setting, actively participating in the care of patients through a local medical practice and associated health services. This program is a highly successful rural workforce recruitment initiative with GP role models introducing medical students to the rigours, challenges and rewards of rural medicine.

World recognised and well regarded, the program has produced medical professionals of the highest standard, with the highest rate of return to working and living in regional communities of all South Australian universities.

The broad, integrated and flexible nature of this course suits students who thrive in a learning environment that encourages self-directed autonomy, responsibility and co-operative involvement in the ongoing care and life of individuals, their families and rural communities.

- More than one third (36.8%) of Flinders graduates who participate in the MDRS program (known as the PRCC prior to 2022) between 1999-2012 were working in non-metropolitan MM2-7 in 2017
- Over half of these graduates report a specialty in general practice
- The PRCC/MDRS program has significant impact on smaller, more remote centres. These graduates are 3.4 times more likely to be working MM5-7 locations compared to Flinders graduates who had not participated in the program

Walker L, Isaac V, Walters L, Craig J. 2021. Flinders University rural medical school student program outcomes. *AJGP* 50 (5):319- 321

Rural Sub-Quota Program

Up to 24 places are available for admission into the Doctor of Medicine for applicants from a rural background who demonstrate their commitment to a career in rural practice. Students in this sub-quota are required to participate in the MDRS program and can nominate their preferred site during the admission process.

Each year Flinders University also facilitates rural placements for more than 1000 nursing and allied health students in our rural South Australia regions.



Northern Territory

Flinders Rural and Remote Health has an extensive presence across the Northern Territory, our activities are well spread out with more than 70 staff across campuses which also provide access to remote Aboriginal communities and outstations:

- Darwin
- Alice Springs
- Katherine
- Nhulunbuy
- Tennant Creek

Flinders delivers the NT Medical Program, Bachelor of Paramedic Science, provides student placement and workforce capacity for nursing, allied health and dental students and delivers the suite of post graduate Remote Health Practice courses. The NT Regional Training Hub is focussed on the rural medical training pipeline.





Northern Territory Medical Program (NTMP)

Flinders' four-year graduate entry Doctor of Medicine (MD) is offered entirely in the Northern Territory as a collaboration between Flinders University, the Northern Territory Government Department of Health and the Australian Government Department of Health through the RHMT. The NTMP is designed to provide opportunities for Territory residents to study in the NT and prioritises NT Aboriginal applicants, NT residents, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants from anywhere in Australia.

There is a pathway for school leavers to enter the graduate degree via the Charles Darwin University Bachelor of Clinical Sciences. Students are selected on entry into the Bachelor of Clinical Sciences and progress to the NTMP following two years of successful study.

The Indigenous Entry Pathway provides opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates to enter the NTMP by completing an alternative to the GAMSAT.

The NTMP has a purpose-built academic learning centre on the grounds of Charles Darwin University, and an administration centre and teaching spaces at the Royal Darwin Hospital, as well as established teaching sites in Alice Springs, Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Tennant Creek.

Over the 10 years of the Northern Territory Medical Program

- Over 150 students have graduated
- 15 Indigenous doctors have graduated, that's 10% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students; and 20% of all graduate entry students
- 92% of students in the program have been from the Northern Territory
- The local students are supplemented by around 30 Flinders University students from SA undertaking a year-long placement in the NT each year
- 52% of the South Australian students undertaking long term placement in the NT return to take up junior doctor positions
- 76% of students who spent a year in Darwin, 80% of students who spent a year in Alice Springs, and 92% of students who spent a year in Katherine are still working in the NT
- 54 % of NTMP graduates remain in the Northern Territory beyond their return of service
- 30-40% of GP Registrar trainees in the NT are NTMP graduates

Campbell N, Kennedy E, Rissel C, Gill E, Bergin S, Noutsos T, O'Donoghue O (2021), 2011-2017 Northern Territory Medical Program: student outcomes and graduate workplace locations. MJA 21(4), [6662].

The NTMP works closely with other Flinders NT initiatives including:

- The Poche SA+NT
- Palmerston Super Clinic
- Flinders NT Regional Training Hub





Remote and Rural Interprofessional Placement Learning

Flinders' academics and professional staff provide support and assistance to allied health and nursing students, their universities and clinical supervisors to maximise the outcomes of clinical placements in the Northern Territory.

Through this program Flinders deliver free introductory workshops for students in Central Australia (Alice Springs) and the Top End (Darwin), which cover working with Aboriginal clients in the local context of clinical health services delivery.

- Each year Flinders University facilitates placements in the NT for more than 400 nursing and allied health students from Universities across Australia
- In 2020, just over one-third of students undertaking a placement in the Northern Territory between 2016-2019 were working in MM4-7 regions
- 76% reported that their placement positively influenced them to consider working in a rural or remote location
- 81% to consider working in the NT
- 74% working with marginalised or underserved populations

Campbell N et al, 2021 Workplace locations of allied health and nursing graduates who undertook a placement in the Northern Territory of Australia from 2016 to 2019: An observational cohort study, AJRH online

Remote Health Practice Program

The Remote Health Practice suite of award programs (graduate certificate, graduate diploma and master) and associated short courses provide education specifically focussed on preparing health professionals for the unique requirements of providing health care to people living in remote Australia. Students study online and attend intensive workshops held at the purpose-built simulation facilities.

Indigenous health is core to the teaching, learning and research that is facilitated through these programs. In addition to the workshops facilitated through the RIPPL program, cultural safety training is delivered to local health services and industry through collaborative agreements with a range of partners.

Remote Primary Health Care Manuals

The remote Primary health care manuals are widely used and highly regarded resource in remote health across central, northern, and remote Australia. The Remote Primary Health Care Manuals support and promote good clinical practice in primary health care. The four manuals include the Standard Treatment Manual, Minymaku Kutju Tjukurpa Women's Business Manual, Clinical Procedures Manual and the Medicines Book for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners. New editions will be available late 2022.



Rural Training Hubs – SA and NT

Regional Training Hubs were formed by the Commonwealth Department of Health to address medical workforce maldistribution through contributing to a ‘rural medical training pipeline’ that includes medical students, pre-vocational graduates, vocational trainees and, finally, rural generalist GPs and medical specialists.

In South Australia the Rural Junior Doctor program offers accredited intern and Postgraduate Year Two (PGY2) programs at Mount Gambier and Districts Health Service. Interns and PGY2 appointees in Mount Gambier work as part of a clinical team with guidance from a specialist term supervisor and salaried medical officers.

Combined funding from the Commonwealth and SA Department of Health fund activities in Mount Gambier. The Mount Gambier and Districts Health Service was one of the first rural hospitals in South Australia to offer a full year internship in a rural environment with accreditation from the Medical Board of South Australia.

In the Northern Territory the Regional Training Hub has introduced the following programs:

- Pilot program Advanced Skills in Remote Indigenous Health which is preparing our workforce to live and work in very remote Indigenous communities
- No Cola Just Fun Tour (collaboration with Congress, NTGPE, NTPHN) a two-week engagement of senior and junior doctors in an educational community environment, learning about working in Aboriginal Controlled Health Organisations, social determinants of health and self-care in a remote context
- Cultural Communications: Development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expert group of cultural and clinical educators to explore the patient centred concepts around cross-cultural communication in the NT context including creation of ongoing professional development resources for clinical educators
- Junior Medical Officer Forums that explore ways to expand training opportunities in rural and remote areas of Australia
- Career Expos linking students and junior medical officers with specialist colleges, training organisations and relevant stakeholders

Poche SA+NT

The Poche SA+NT centre is focused on building healthy country, healthy communities and health leaders throughout Australia's central corridor, across the Northern Territory and South Australia.

Traditional Owners are employed as Elders on campus in Darwin and Alice Springs.

Established and funded by philanthropists Greg Poche AO and Kay Van Norton Poche, Poche Centres seek to leverage universities, alongside communities and governments to seek solutions to address complex health problems faced by Aboriginal people. With nodes in Darwin

Poche SA+NT is distinguished by being:

- Aboriginal-led
- Guided by local Elders and a national network of eminent advisers
- Closely linked to community, to provide insights into community priorities and opportunities
- Solely focused on improving Indigenous health outcomes through holistic initiatives



Student Placements and Rural/Remote Accommodation SA and NT

Growing evidence suggests that health and medical students who undertake extended training in a rural area, and those from a rural background, are more likely to join the rural workforce upon graduation.

Flinders University manages accommodation and subsidises rental costs for students studying in rural and remote areas, supporting medical, nursing and allied health students from metropolitan and other rural and remote settings to undertake placements at hospitals and health services in rural and regional South Australia and the Northern Territory.

We also assist students to source accommodation solutions in areas across rural SA and remote NT. Priority is given to domestic health professional students, but opportunities for placements are also available to students enrolled in other programs and international students.



NTMP student

Rural Nursing

Flinders University nursing students can undertake the entire Bachelor of Nursing at the Flinders Renmark campus.

Allied Health

Students enrolled in speech pathology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, optometry, disability studies and clinical rehabilitation at Flinders, undertake work-integrated learning placements at hospitals and health services throughout rural and regional and remote South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Bachelor of Paramedic Science – Regional External Program

Established in 2021, this innovative regional external program allows regional students from South Australia to undertake the paramedicine degree without needing to relocate to Adelaide. Students can perform their coursework online and attend the Bedford Park campus for compulsory practical workshop intensives and clinical exams to meet the practical learning requirements of the degree, spending up to one or two weeks in Adelaide each semester for the duration of the degree.

Bachelor of Paramedic Science NT

Students are able to study the full paramedicine degree in the Northern Territory in collaboration with St John Ambulance. Theoretical content is available online with clinical skills and practical education delivered as face-to-face intensive workshops with students spending up to one or two weeks in Darwin each semester.



Speech pathology students on placement in Katherine



Paramedic science students

Research

Flinders University Rural and Remote academics undertake strategic research into the key themes of rural health workforce, clinical education, innovation in health service delivery, mental health, dementia, and Aboriginal health and wellbeing.

We partner with other universities, government and communities to address local, national and international rural health challenges.

With a growing team of Indigenous health focussed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers our Northern Territory team leads work in alcohol and other drugs, men's health, health promotion, and health equity, with a particular focus on social and emotional well-being. Nationally recognised Indigenous researchers also engage in capacity building work and chronic disease prevention research. Clinical research is led by a renowned Indigenous nephrologist. This team has positioned Flinders as an exemplar amongst universities proudly achieving the status of a preferred destination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment with 20% of all professional and academic staff in the NT identifying as First Nations people.

Through our highly successful academic programs, rural students also contribute to our research outcomes through community engagement activities and projects.





