



S·A·R·R·A·H
Services for Australian
Rural and Remote Allied Health

21 September 2016

A message from SARRAH to our Parliamentarians

The following information provides an update on the Allied Health Scholarships and the impact of the Government's delays in setting up its new Health Workforce Scholarship Program.

SARRAH administers five types of scholarships under the Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme (NAHSSS).

- **Undergraduate:** scholarships for rural students enrolled or intending to enrol in a course that qualifies them to practice as an Allied Health professional. In 2015-16 SARRAH provided 107 Undergraduate scholarships.
- **Postgraduate:** scholarships for allied health professionals from rural and remote areas to undertake postgraduate level study relevant clinical practice. In 2015-16, SARRAH provided 193 Postgraduate scholarships.
- **Clinical Psychology:** scholarships to undertake postgraduate studies in clinical psychology, open to students who are from rural and remote areas and who have completed the undergraduate level qualifications required. In 2015-16, SARRAH provided 44 Clinical Psychology scholarships.
- **Continuing Professional Development Scholarship:** Scholarships for practicing allied health professionals in rural and remote areas to undertake continuing professional development activities. In 2015-16, SARRAH provided 108 CPD scholarships.
- **Clinical Placement Scholarship:** Scholarships for allied health students to undertake a clinical placement in rural and remote areas. In 2015-16, SARRAH provided 96 Clinical Placement scholarships.

Overall, SARRAH was able to provide 548 scholarships in 2015-16, to a total value of \$7.255million. This was a decrease of 34% compared with 2014-15, when we awarded 872 scholarships. The Government has announced that it is replacing the NAHSSS program with a new program – Health Workforce Scholarship Program. It first made this announcement in the May 2015 Budget when it said that the new program would commence on 1 July 2016. In the May 2016 Budget, it said that the new program would commence in time for the 2017 academic year.

In previous years, SARRAH has opened applications for scholarships between August and October. We also made sure that applicants were informed if they did or didn't receive a scholarship in December, to give them enough time to apply and accept their enrolment offers (particularly important for people applying for undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships).

SARRAH is very concerned that because the Government hasn't released a tender to administer the new Health Workforce Scholarship Program, there will not be scholarships available for people who plan to study in semester 1, 2017. This means people in rural and remote areas will miss out on the opportunity to study next year. Our feedback tells us that if a student from a rural or remote area doesn't

get a scholarship, they are not able to go to university. Ultimately scholarships are important to deliver a health workforce for rural areas and this delay will have a longer term impact.

We are receiving a high level of inquiries from people seeking information about scholarships for next year – our mailing list has over 1400 subscribers, and this number is growing rapidly. To cover the gap left by the Government's delay in setting up the new scholarship program, SARRAH believes the Government should act quickly and make funds available to offer new scholarships under the NAHSSS. SARRAH could open a round of scholarships within 6 weeks, delivering scholarships for semester 1 2017.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rod Wellington', written in a cursive style.

Rod Wellington
Chief Executive Officer