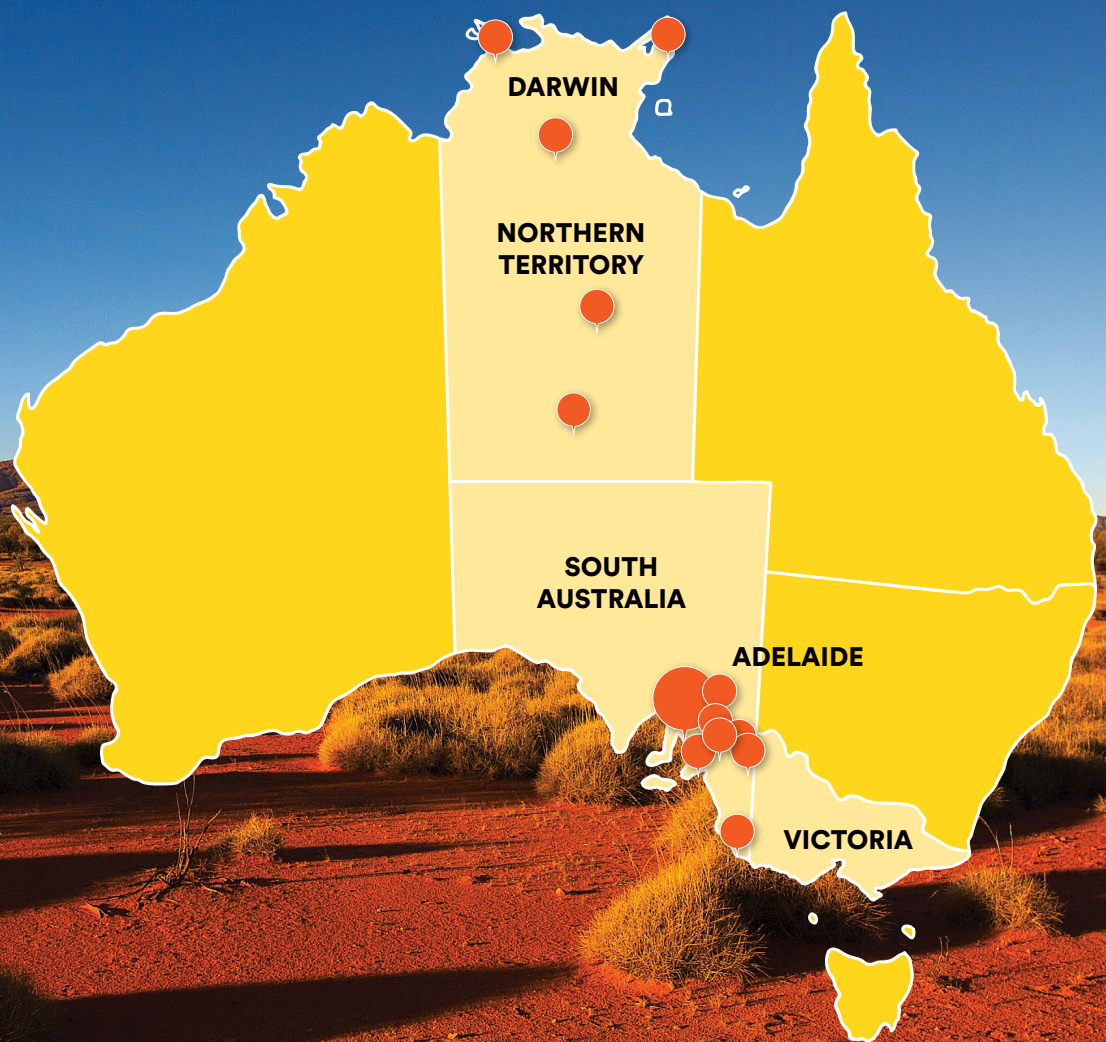


Rural and Remote Health

South Australia and Northern Territory



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, Kurna, Larrakia, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Ramindjeri, Warumungu, Wardaman and Yolngu people. We honour their Elders past, present and emerging.

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.

Situated upon unceded lands of Aboriginal peoples across the Australian Central Corridor, Flinders Rural and Remote Health SA and NT work collaboratively with leaders in local communities. Together we facilitate high-quality multidisciplinary regional academic and research programs, to positively impact some of the most diverse and culturally rich communities in Australia. We prioritise employing and supporting the careers of local, rural background, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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.

South Australia

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

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

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

Flinders Rural and Remote Health 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, in partnership with health services, provides access to the Australian Rural Teletrials 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 general practices, 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 some time in year one (MD1) and year two (MD2), and their entire third year (MD3) in a rural community setting, actively participating in the care of patients at local medical practices and associated health services.

In 2023 Flinders introduced the option of ‘Stay in Place’ MD4, which provides students with the opportunity to stay in their chosen rural community beyond year three (MD3), for the whole of year four (MD4). This program provides a pathway for students to remain rural for their prevocational training.

The MDRS is a highly successful rural workforce recruitment initiative with rural General Practitioners and Rural Generalist role models introducing medical students to the rigours, challenges and rewards of rural medicine.

World recognised and well regarded, the longitudinal medical program has produced medical professionals of the highest standard.

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.

- Almost one third (31.6%) of Flinders graduates who participated in the MDRS program (known as the PRCC prior to 2022) between 1999-2019 are working in non-metropolitan MM2-7 in 2023.
- 62.4% of those working in MM2-7 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 in MM5-7 locations compared to Flinders graduates who had not participated in the program.¹

¹ 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 36 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. Students from Flinders Rural and Remote Health SA regions have an opportunity to stay in those regions for a significant amount of the Doctor of Medicine, in the clinical years of the program (MD3 and MD4).

University Department of Rural Health

Each year Flinders University facilitates rural placements for more than 1000 nursing and allied health students in our rural South Australia regions. In addition to the traditional service model, we have recently introduced a student-led Aboriginal health clinic based on an interdisciplinary model, with the initial phase incorporating students from physiotherapy, speech pathology and occupational therapy programs. This important collaboration between Flinders, Riverland Mallee Coorong Local Health Network (RMCLHN) and a range of South Australian Universities is delivering health care to patients at an intergenerational playgroup at the Aboriginal Health Wellbeing Centre at Barmera Health Service clinic on the shores of Lake Bonney.



Northern Territory

Flinders Rural and Remote Health has an extensive presence across the Northern Territory (NT).

Our activities are dispersed across both regional campuses and remote Aboriginal communities and outstations with more than 100 staff, including over 29% of staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Our sites include:

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

Flinders delivers the NT Medical Program (NTMP), Bachelor of Paramedicine and Remote Health Practice courses, and provides student placement and workforce capacity-building activities for nursing, allied health, medical, and dental students.

The NT Regional Training Hub is focused on the rural medical training pipeline (see Page 7).



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 who meet progression criteria enter the NTMP following two years of successful study.

The Indigenous Entry Stream is a pathway that provides opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates to enter the NTMP by completing a program of study as 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.

Since 2011 the Northern Territory Medical Program:

- has graduated 186 doctors
- has graduated 18 Indigenous doctors (that’s 10% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students), and 20% of all graduate-entry students.

A study of Northern Territory Medical Program showed that between 2011 and 2017:

- 89 % of students in the program have been from the Northern Territory
- local students are supplemented by around 30 Flinders University students from SA, including up to 18 who undertake a two-year placement in the NT
- 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 were 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.²

² 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 initiatives in the NT including:

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





University Department of Rural Health (UDRH)

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

Through this program, Flinders provides contextually relevant cultural training for each region to support culturally responsive health service delivery. Bespoke cultural immersion experiences are delivered through our Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Tennant Creek placement programs. Students are also supported with inter-professional training opportunities, subsidised accommodation and local supports whilst undertaking placements across the NT.

- Each year Flinders University facilitates placements in the NT for more than 500 nursing and allied health students from 25 Universities across Australia.
- In 2020, just over one-third of students who undertook a placement in the Northern Territory between 2016-2019 were working in rural and remote regions (MM 4 – 7) post-graduation.
- 76% reported that their placement positively influenced them to consider working in a rural or remote location.
- 81% considered working in the NT.
- 74% wanted to work with marginalised or underserved populations.³

³ 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 focused 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. Core to these activities are the preparatory courses for Remote Area Nurses including the Transition to Remote Area Nursing (TRAN) courses offered at multiple regional locations.

Indigenous health is core to the teaching, learning and research that is facilitated through these programs. In addition to the workshops facilitated through the UDRH 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 evidence based, widely used and highly regarded resources 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 were available from late 2022. Flinders coordinates the expert clinician editorial committees and publication of the manuals in hard copy and on-line, in collaboration with joint venture partners Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Central Australia Rural Practitioners, and CRANaplus.



Rural Training Hubs – SA and NT

Regional Training Hubs (RTHs) are an initiative of the Commonwealth Department of Health, designed to support medical workforce recruitment and retention in rural & regional areas.

The Hubs' focus is on the whole of the *rural medical training pipeline* which includes medical students, pre-vocational graduates, vocational trainees, as well as rural generalists, general practitioners, medical specialists, and clinical supervisors.

The Regional Training Hubs aim to:

- collaborate with communities, health services, specialist medical colleges and other key stakeholders to enable students and junior doctors, who want to practice rurally, to complete as much of their medical training as possible within rural & regional areas
- investigate the possibilities of new training pathways and support health services with accreditation processes for new training positions
- support education & training, professional development, career planning, mentoring and social and emotional wellbeing of students and doctors in all stages of their medical training
- grow clinical supervision capacity by supporting local practitioners to become clinical supervisors.

In the Northern Territory, the **NT Regional Training Hub's** vision is to promote a thriving and dynamic medical workforce for all lands and communities of the Northern Territory, and emphasise competence, confidence, compassion, and cultural respect. The focus is on rural, regional, and remote workforces and the systems that support them.

In South Australia, the **Limestone Coast Regional Training Hub** works closely with the Limestone Coast Local Health Network Medical Education Unit (LCLHN MEU), Mount Gambier Hospital and local general practices to create rewarding rural training experiences for all within the region.



Poche SA+NT

Poche SA+NT is one of five Poche Centres established and funded by philanthropists Greg Poche AO and Kay Van Norton Poche. The centres seek to leverage universities, communities and governments to seek solutions to address complex health problems experienced by Aboriginal people. .

Working across the South Australia-Northern Territory corridor, Poche SA+NT currently has nodes in Darwin, Alice Springs and Adelaide aiming to improve the outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through supporting cultural continuity, health and science capabilities and research.

Poche SA+NT has strong Aboriginal leadership that is recognised across local communities, the academy, and state, territory and federal governments. This includes having a globally recognised Aboriginal Director and local Elders who work within a national network of First Nations leaders.

Poche SA+NT also has a growing team that drives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led priorities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities within the organisation, across the corridor and beyond.

Strategically, Poche SA+NT works to support higher education and building capabilities through adaptive and innovative pathways into the workforce. Research focuses on data governance, cancer and genomics as well as driving knowledge translation and advocacy to promote best practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and education.



Flinders
University



Poche
SA+NT



Rural Nursing

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

Allied Health

Students enrolled in allied health undertake work integrated learning placements at hospitals, health services and community-based settings, including schools and aged care services, throughout rural and remote South Australia and the Northern Territory.

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 and subsidises the costs for safe and secure accommodation for medical, nursing, and allied health students studying health courses and undertaking placement at hospitals, GP practices and health services in South Australia and the Northern Territory.



Bachelor of Paramedicine – Regional External Program

Established in 2021, this innovative regional external program allows regional students from South Australia to undertake the paramedicine degree without relocating to Adelaide.

Students can perform their coursework online and only 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 Paramedicine 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.



Rural Health Scholarships

There is a range of scholarships available for students studying medicine, nursing, health and allied health, including those relevant to rural origin and Indigenous students.

Students are encouraged to apply, and the scholarships assist students in many areas, from coursework and fees to accommodation and placement costs.

Details of scholarships offered by Flinders University that students may be eligible for can be found at [Flinders.edu.au/scholarships](https://www.flinders.edu.au/scholarships)

Research

Flinders University Rural and Remote Health (RRH) is committed to undertaking research and evaluation that aims to advance the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities through meaningful partnerships.

RRH research staff and Poche SA+NT partner with local communities, the Aboriginal community-controlled health sector, non-government organisations, government agencies, Flinders University research centres and other universities to address local health needs and priorities. RRH research also aims to drive positive changes to national and international rural and remote health policy and practice.

To achieve this aim, RRH has a growing team of researchers and affiliates from a broad range of clinical and non-clinical health and research backgrounds. RRH research has a strong focus on advancing the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in regional, rural and remote settings, spanning physical, social, and cultural determinants of health. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience and leadership underpin much of this work, which includes meaningful applied public health research underpinned by the promotion of health equity, the adoption of community governance models, effective knowledge translation, and positive community impact. This includes research programs relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing, renal health, men’s health, and social and emotional wellbeing. Other research areas of RRH include health workforce, clinical education, and innovative service delivery specific to RRH contexts.

Research includes models of health professions education that are appropriate to the rural community context, and that serve the community by proactively addressing local health priorities. We are taking a long-term approach, with an interest in discovering more about how the experiences of students undertaking rural clinical placements shape their workforce location choices. This research agenda, while just beginning, is ambitious, multidisciplinary, cross-institutional and cross-sectoral, and aims to foster and strengthen partnerships between community, industry and Flinders University across the Central Australian footprint.

We also support research as a career opportunity for rural, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In South Australia a partnership with the Australian Teletriads program provides opportunities for mid-career clinicians to ‘test’ a career in clinical trials research through a partnership between local health networks and Flinders Rural and Remote Health. Similar opportunities exist in the NT as well.

Higher Degree by Research

We invite interested students to consider research projects focused on advancing rural and remote health and to explore higher degree research opportunities with our growing RRH research teams in both SA and NT. This includes honours, Masters and PhD opportunities.

Partnerships

Strategic partnerships and collaborations are essential to Flinders Rural and Remote Health’s responsiveness to local community needs.

South Australia

We are collaborating with the Riverland Mallee Coorong Local Health Network (RMCLHN) to develop a pipeline of rural allied health professionals. This will address workforce retention by increasing student placement opportunities, creating career pathways for young allied health professionals and creating opportunities within the region to become academic clinical educators.

Other partnerships and collaborations include:

- the Riverland Academy of Clinical Excellence (RACE) research collaboration
- Flinders University Barossa campus, based at Nuriootpa TAFE SA
- Limestone Coast and Mt Gambier community organisations, which utilise facilities at Flinders University Mt Gambier campus.
- clinical trials currently in the Limestone Coast and Riverland
- a collaboration with Aboriginal Health in the Adelaide Hills, Mallee and Fleurieu regions, and the Murray Bridge Hub for Allied Health expansion in the Riverland and Murraylands, working alongside Aboriginal health colleagues in the region.



Northern Territory

Flinders has a long-term partnership with the traditional owners and custodians of the East Arnhem region. In Nhulunbuy, we have multiple co-designed/collaborative projects with Miwatj Health, a long-standing Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO). The Yolŋu Heart Health for Life project seeks to implement a co-designed student-assisted cardiac rehabilitation program in East Arnhem Land. Lahnapuy Health services and other local organisations are also partners. A participatory action research project focused on the adoption of a stepped care model of mental health care for youth in East Arnhem Land also reflects a partnership with Miwatj, as does the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to Prevent Lung Disease (APPLE) study. APPLE is a multi-site, multi-jurisdiction, multi-partner NHMRC funded study led by Telethon Kids Institute to improve the outcomes for children with wet cough across Northern Australia. Flinders is also partnering with Menzies School of Health Research and NT Health to undertake this study in the Naiuyu community on the banks of the Daly River.

In Katherine, Flinders is partnering with Katherine West Health Board, Indigenous Allied Health Australia, and Wurli Wurlijang Aboriginal Health Service to deliver an allied health student placement expansion project in collaboration with local schools and remote outreach programs.

Flinders has also been awarded Regional Partnership Priority Pool Program (RPPPP) funding by the Australian Government Department of Education to plan and deliver a project focused on building the aspirations of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in Alice Springs, Katherine, and Nhulunbuy to pursue education, training and career pathways in allied health and Aboriginal primary health care. This is a strategic partnership with Indigenous Allied Health Australia, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, and the National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners.

Flinders partners with NT Primary Health Network (NTPHN) and other partners to deliver the Remote Health Experience in Katherine, and the Very Remote Health Experience in Tennant Creek. This supports cultural and remote health learning for medicine, nursing and allied health students undertaking studies or placements in the NT.



[Flinders.edu.au/MPH](https://flinders.edu.au/MPH)

