

Going remote: emergency nurses accepting the challenge of a remote area nursing secondment.

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Objective: To examine the challenges faced by metropolitan emergency nurses working for the first time in a remote indigenous community.

Background: As presented in 2014, an innovative collaboration between Western Health (WH) and the Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC) was developed giving metropolitan emergency nurses the opportunity to undertake a remote nursing secondment. This partnership aimed to provide participating nurses with a unique opportunity to go beyond their comfort zone and try something new, while still fully supported by WH and RAHC. This 2015 presentation will share the journey of the participating nurses during this pilot program.

Main points: All participants in the pilot program were experienced emergency nurses with post graduate diplomas: emergencies are their forte and treatment of common emergency presentations is second nature. When faced with such conditions while working in a remote community with limited staff, equipment and facilities, desired treatments and interventions may not be readily available; leading to a situation where the nurse's usual practices, self-confidence and coping strategies are tested. Using a case study model, key challenges will be explored. The experiences of one of the participating nurses, confronted in the middle of the night by a critically unwell patient, and his devastated dog, will be shared.

Conclusion: Involvement in the WH + RAHC pilot remote nursing secondment presented many challenges, whether acute medical presentations or having to deal with a yard full of wild horses after a 2am call out. However, it also provided participants with an enriching experience, allowed for both personal and professional development, and improved knowledge, decision making and clinical confidence. As this was a pilot program, participants were engaged in a feedback process; with the program now successfully moving into a second year, participants can use their experiences to inform the next cohort of nurses for the adventure that lies ahead.