

CENTRAL WESTERN HEALTH EDUCATION PLAN



Good Health for all Australians

Inland Health Strategy

Charles Sturt University aims to ensure a comprehensive range of highly qualified health professionals available to meet the health service needs of inland communities and to conduct research and develop strategies to promote healthy inland communities and lifestyles.

To achieve this aim, Charles Sturt University has adopted an *Inland Health Strategy* that will focus our programs on the following inter-linked objectives:

Help to Address Inland Health Labour Force Needs

Deliver the most comprehensive range of high quality health education programs possible in areas of identified labour force need across inland Australia.

Expand Access for Inland Students

Develop flexible entry pathways, and innovate with new technology in our distance and clinical education, to expand the participation of students from regional, smaller regional and remote communities in University health programs.

Support the Retention of Health Professionals in Inland Australia

Integrate into the design and delivery of our programs strategies that support the retention of qualified health graduates and professionals in inland Australia.

Prepare Graduates for Clinical Practice in Inland Communities

Ensure students are employment-ready by maximising clinical experience opportunities and innovating in clinical simulation; develop and implement learning approaches that prepare students for rural practice, including the promotion of inter-professional learning, and; equip our health graduates with the knowledge, understanding, and skills they require to operate as culturally sensitive practitioners across Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and other cultures.

Promote Innovative Approaches to Practice

Support health career pathways, paraprofessional health careers and appropriate opportunities for expanded scope of practice to address health labour force needs.

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Help to Address Health Services Needs

Identify opportunities in the delivery of teaching and research for the University to provide, or support, clinical services in areas of labour force shortage in inland communities.

Conduct Research that Addresses the Health Needs of Inland Australia

Conduct research that addresses key health issues for inland communities, including the development of programs to promote healthy lifestyles, deepen community resilience, prevent ill-health and support early diagnosis and intervention.

Work with Our Communities and Professions for a Healthy Future

Develop strategic relationships with key stakeholders to share information, improve coordination, reduce waste and duplication, empower inland communities and promote professional networks that support quality delivery and retention of health practitioners.

Delivering on the health needs of central western New South Wales

Reflecting labour force shortages and student demand across the central west of New South Wales, Charles Sturt University is embarking on an ambitious plan to significantly increase the numbers of students studying health-related courses in the central west. Central to the plan is to capitalise on the unique opportunities presented by the close proximity of two large inland campuses in Bathurst and Orange. This proximity will allow Charles Sturt University to deliver a broader mix of health programs to all prospective students in the central west by promoting a strategic focus on each campus. By mapping out a clear strategy for health science development at each campus, it will also allow for a concentration of investment in world-class facilities and reduced competition between the campuses for the same students.

Central Western Inland Health Education Plan

The *Central Western Inland Health Education Plan* will establish two major inter-professional health science hubs for the central west, alongside our specialist programs at the Dubbo Campus:

- the Nursing and Emergency Medicine Hub at Bathurst, and
- the Medical and Dental Science, Pharmacy, Mental Health Nursing and Allied Health Hub at Orange.

Bathurst

1. Consolidate and grow on-campus and distance education nursing programs at Bathurst to promote coordinated investment in infrastructure and the construction of world-class facilities for students from across the central west and other areas of NSW.
2. Affirm our commitment to the growth of paramedical sciences at Bathurst by expanding our Accelerated Paramedic Pathway Program (a 2009 joint initiative with the Ambulance Service of NSW) to increase the supply of paramedical officers to rural and regional centres in areas of critical shortage (student numbers will grow from 300 to 600 over the next three years).
3. Construct the Regional Inter-professional Clinical Simulation Centre in Bathurst to promote improved clinical competencies, increased engagement with practitioners and the creation of a team learning environment for paramedics and nurses to improve health outcomes in emergency care in rural and regional areas (a Federal funding application has been submitted under the Capital Development Program).
4. Construct a Dental and Oral Health Clinic in Bathurst to provide for clinical rotation of students and the expansion of dental and oral health services to Bathurst and surrounding communities.

Orange

5. Phase out the on-campus nursing program (nine graduates to date) at Orange to allow investment in nursing to be consolidated, while retaining distance education nursing capacity and staffing at Orange.
6. Continue to support the clinical science pathway program with the University of Sydney that allows Charles Sturt University's rural and regional students to undertake the first three years of clinical science study at Orange and then apply for entry to the University of Sydney to undertake medicine with the aim of significantly increasing number of medical graduates returning to rural and regional practice.
7. Consolidate the new dental science program and evaluate options for expanding student enrolments from rural and regional areas to improve retention of graduate dentists in rural and regional practice.

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8. Expand Mental Health Nursing to improve the supply of qualified health professionals to provide mental health care in rural and regional communities and extend linkages to Bloomfield and other mental health services in the central west.
9. Review the selection processes for pharmacy, including expanding flexibility entry pathways to maximise the number of graduates returning to professional practice in rural and regional areas to address labour force shortages in smaller communities.
10. Open new physiotherapy, rehabilitation science and other allied health programs at Orange in 2010/11 to increase the number of practitioners in areas of shortage in rural and regional areas in the central west.

Dubbo

11. Build on strengths and enrolments in Indigenous nursing.
12. Construct the joint Dental and Oral Health Clinic in Dubbo with the University of Sydney and Greater Western Area Health Service to provide clinical rotation for students and an expansion of dental and oral health services to Dubbo and surrounding communities.
13. Continue to strengthen the role of Dubbo as a coordinating centre for Indigenous studies in the central and far western regions as demonstrated by the University's bid to locate the Indigenous Health unit of the planned iUDRH in Dubbo (funding application currently before the Federal Government).

Cross-Campus

14. Expand pathways to health sciences by continuing to support the e2 project across the central west to allow school students in Year 11 and 12 to study University health science subjects and gain a head-start to their University degrees. This project began in 2009 with nine students and aims to significantly increase the number of students entering health science programs over the next few years and will be rolled out to Bathurst and other locations over the coming years.
15. Actively pursue the University's \$12 million funding application submitted to the Federal Government for the establishment of the Inland University Department of Rural Health (iUDRH), with centres in Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo, Young and Condobolin to enhance linkages between students and practitioners, increase clinical training and development opportunities for practitioners in smaller regional settings and expand clinical placement opportunities for students as part of their pre-admission requirements.
16. Continue to participate in the CENTROC Health Forum to promote coordination of strategies between educational and health services and improve the recruitment and retention of health practitioners across the central west.

Outcomes

The *Central Western Inland Health Education Plan* aims to grow the range of health science offerings to students across the central west to better meet labour force shortages and student demand. This will require new investments in facilities, staffing and collaborations to ensure an increase in rural and regional practitioners in the medium-long term and improved capacity to meet student demand.

The creation of two hubs with a diverse mix of programming will enable the University to further embed inter-professional learning in all of our health programs, expanding the skills of our health graduates to practice effectively in the contemporary health labour force.

The Plan will result in better coordination of programs across the Orange and Bathurst campuses, allowing investments to be strategically focussed on building capacity across the health sciences in the central west.

The University is currently developing a Health Education Plan for the Riverina-Murray and Rural and Remote Communities.

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For more information

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