

Tuesday 23 May 2006

Charles Sturt University continues dedication to rural pharmacy

Australia's first pharmacy degree program offered outside a metropolitan area continues to attract staff and students dedicated to practice in rural and regional areas.

This year, over 120 students were accepted into the program at Charles Sturt University (CSU), with 79 joining the University's Wagga Wagga Campus and 45 at Orange, which is in its second year of pharmacy enrolments.

The University's commitment to the education of pharmacists has seen a dramatic increase in the professional services available to rural communities. Each year, forty new CSU pharmacy graduates are employed in rural practices.

Head of Charles Sturt University's School of Biomedical Sciences, Associate Professor Lyn Angel, believes the CSU pharmacy program provides students with the necessary knowledge and preparation for working effectively in rural communities.

"The success of the program is in its ability to incorporate elements of pharmacy specific to students wishing to practice in rural and regional areas of Australia", said Associate Professor Angel. "The local pharmacist is often the first place people go to seek help for a range of conditions, and in small communities, it is often the only option".

The program's achievements since its establishment in 1997 have resulted in considerable interest from qualified industry professionals. 2006 has already seen the addition of six new pharmacy staff members. A Biochemist, Microbiologist and a Lab technician are among the new members of the team who will assist in supporting the growing numbers of pharmacy students at CSU.

The Charles Sturt Pharmacy Foundation was developed to support the CSU pharmacy program which was established with the primary aim of addressing the shortage of pharmacists in rural areas. The Pharmacy Foundation has supported the development of the program by contributing to the establishment of suitable facilities at the Wagga Wagga and Orange campuses and providing scholarships for students.

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