

Centre of Research Excellence

in Rural and Remote
Primary Health Care

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Overcoming access barriers in relation to primary health care is crucial to achieving equitable health outcomes for Australians living in rural and remote areas. To address this issue, the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute has established a Centre of Research Excellence in accessible and equitable primary health service provision in rural and remote Australia (CRE).

This CRE is a collaboration between Monash University School of Rural Health, the Centre for Remote Health, a joint centre of Flinders University and Charles Darwin University in Alice Springs, and the University of Sydney Department of Rural Health in Broken Hill.

The CRE aims to develop:

- a better understanding of health behaviour relating to primary health care service utilisation in rural and remote Australia;
- better measures of access to guide resource allocation relating to primary health care in small rural and remote communities;
- a comprehensive framework for evaluating the impact of rural and remote primary health care services on access and equity of health outcomes; and
- evidence-based models of sustainable primary health care for different rural and remote contexts.



Back (L-R): Melissa Lindeman, Steve Guthridge, Susan Thomas, David Perkins, Mike Jones, Matthew McGrail, Penny Buykx, Marita Chisholm, Sue Kirby, David Lyle, Yuejen Zhao, John Wakerman
Front (L-R): Bernadette Ward, John Humphreys, Deborah Russell, Jess Bath, Tim Carey **Absent:** Leigh Kinsman, Lisa Lavey

The CRE will achieve its aims through undertaking research which examines:

- how best to measure access to primary health care services in rural and remote areas using an 'index of access' that links service availability with the health needs, health behaviour, service utilisation and health outcomes of different communities;
- what indicators best measure the primary health care services that communities require (taking account of population size, location and need), and appropriate benchmarks for these indicators; and
- what service models work best to minimise barriers (such as distance and affordability) and maximise access to primary health care in different contexts, focusing on aged care, mental health and Indigenous health.

This research will assist consumers, providers and policymakers to plan, monitor and evaluate the equitable provision of health care for all Australians.

Embedded in the research program are three related key activities:

- *Knowledge translation into policy and practice:* The research will be undertaken across multiple sites, guided by a National Advisory Committee, and seek the participation of all relevant stakeholders.
- *Building research capacity in rural and remote areas:* A key aspect will be post-graduate training and engaging early career and Indigenous researchers.
- *Responding to requests for state-of-the-art evidence:* to underpin policies relevant to the provision of primary health care services in rural and remote areas.

Please visit our website for regular updates:

www.crerrphc.org.au

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