

RURAL PRACTICE ESSENTIALS

*Supporting allied health practices to
thrive in rural and remote Australia*

2026



Services for Australian
Rural and Remote Allied Health



Contents

1.	Welcome.....	4
	A little about me... ..	4
2.	About the program: the What and the why.....	5
2.1.	What is Rural Practice Essentials?.....	5
2.2.	Why this program exists	5
2.3.	Who the program is for.....	5
3.	Program Overview	6
3.1.	Program structure	6
3.2.	Learning approach	6
3.3.	Expected outcomes.....	6
4.	Program Curriculum	6
5.	Program Timeline	7
6.	Guest presenters:	8
7.	Participation Requirements.....	8
7.1.	Participants	8
8.	Support and engagement.....	9
9.	Next Steps.....	9
10.	Frequently Asked Questions	9

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH) acknowledge the Ngunnawal peoples on whose land their office is situated. We also acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands where SARRAH Team, supporting the program and the participants of the program, live and work. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs, and relationship with the land, which continues to be of great importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living today. We also pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples from across Australia who have participated in this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SARRAH would like to acknowledge organisations and individuals across Australia who made significant contributions to SARRAH's Rural and Remote Practice Foundations, which underpins the Rural Practice Essentials program.

2023 Review Committee

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We also acknowledge the generous contributions of the Foundations sponsors, without whose support this would not have been possible.

RURAL WORKFORCE AGENCIES



1. WELCOME

Welcome to Rural Practice Essentials (RPE).

This program has been designed to support rural and remote allied health clinicians and practice owners to understand the factors that shape health service delivery and to apply evidence-based strategies to build sustainable services

Delivering allied health services in rural and remote Australia is both rewarding and complex. Decisions about service delivery often sit at the intersection of funding models, workforce constraints, community need, policy settings, and practitioner wellbeing.

Rural Practice Essentials provides a structured environment to explore these realities, build practical capability, and connect with peers who are facing similar challenges.

A little about me...

I've been a physiotherapist for 40 years, and it's been an incredibly rewarding journey. Along the way, I've built a wide range of clinical experience across both public health and private practice, including running my own physiotherapy clinic in Cowra, NSW. I'm passionate about helping people manage pain and hold a Master of Science in Medicine (Pain Management) from the University of Sydney.

Beyond clinical practice, I've had the opportunity to work in leadership and management roles across private companies and state government health services, as well as with a remote Aboriginal Community-Controlled organisation. I've also spent six years serving on the Board of a rural Primary Health Network, contributing to the strengthening of primary care services in regional communities.

I'm a graduate of the Advanced Leadership Program with Women and Leadership Australia, a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and a proud member of the Australian Physiotherapy Association.

Throughout my career, I've remained committed to improving health outcomes, supporting strong communities, and, alongside my co-presenters, I look forward to continuing to support better access to allied health services in rural and remote Australia through the Rural Practice Essentials program.

Cath.



2. ABOUT THE PROGRAM: THE WHAT AND THE WHY

2.1. What is Rural Practice Essentials?

Rural Practice Essentials (RPE) is a **six-part webinar series** that supports allied health professionals to build system literacy and practical capability for sustainable rural practice.

The program brings together:

- System insights into the rural and remote health landscape
- Business and service sustainability fundamentals
- Workforce planning and development strategies
- Models of care and service delivery approaches
- Lived experience from rural practice owners

The program is delivered online across six consecutive sessions, designed to build knowledge progressively and apply learning in real time.

2.2. Why this program exists

Rural and remote allied health services operate in a complex environment where business sustainability, workforce availability, policy settings, and community expectations are deeply interconnected.

Many allied health professionals—particularly those in private or non-government settings—receive limited formal training in:

- business sustainability
- workforce strategy
- service design in rural contexts

Rural Practice Essentials responds to this gap by providing an end-to-end, system-informed learning experience, rather than isolated business or clinical content.

The program is designed as a capacity-building and risk-reduction initiative, supporting services that are:

- financially viable
- workforce-ready
- culturally safe
- sustainable over time

Please note:

RPE is not a business course - it is a risk-reduction and capacity-building intervention for rural and remote allied health services. Attendance at all six sessions enables providers to deliver services that are sustainable, accountable, workforce-ready and resilient.

2.3. Who the program is for

Rural Practice Essentials is designed for:

- Rural and remote allied health practice owners
- Clinicians considering private practice or service expansion
- Allied health managers and team leaders
- Early-career clinicians seeking system and business literacy

The program is open across allied health professions and does not require prior business training.

3. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

3.1. Program structure

Rural Practice Essentials is delivered as:

- 6 live online sessions (webinars)
- Delivered over 6 consecutive weeks
- Approximately 60–90 minutes per session
- Includes expert facilitators, guest presenters, and peer discussion

The structure is intentionally designed to:

- minimise disruption to clinical workloads
- support ongoing engagement
- enable immediate application of learning

3.2. Learning approach

RPE Learning is:

- Practical and application-focused
- System-informed and policy-aware
- Grounded in rural and remote realities
- Supported by real-world examples and case insights
- Designed to foster peer connection and shared problem-solving

The program draws on both evidence and lived experience, including direct input from rural practice owners.

3.3. Expected outcomes

By the end of the program, participants will:

- Understand the key factors shaping rural and remote health service delivery
- Describe funding models and their implications for service sustainability
- Apply practical approaches to workforce planning and retention
- Identify appropriate models of care for their local context
- Develop strategies to improve service capacity and resilience
- Strengthen their ability to make informed operational and strategic decisions

Participants will also leave with practical ideas they can implement immediately in their own service or career context.

4. PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The program includes 6 facilitated online sessions, each lasting 60-90 minutes. These sessions are designed to be completed as a series, with each session building on the previous one.

Completing all six sessions supports:

- system-level understanding
- integrated decision-making
- stronger service capability

Table 1: Facilitated sessions

Session and Topic	Practice Foundations Module
Session 1: Introduction to Rural and Remote Allied Health	▪ The Australian rural and remote health system ▪ Health profiles of rural communities ▪ Regulatory environment ▪ Quality and safety considerations ▪ Cultural responsiveness
Session 2: Business Sustainability	▪ Funding streams (fee-for-service, contracts, block funding) ▪ Staff utilisation and service efficiency ▪ Understanding overheads ▪ Digital health and business systems ▪ Guest presenter
Session 3: Building Service Capacity	▪ Models of care (clinic, hub-and-spoke, telehealth, outreach) ▪ Community engagement ▪ Workforce establishment ▪ Service design consideration
Session 4: Workforce Planning	▪ Recruitment pathways (students, graduates, cadetships) ▪ Retention strategies ▪ Career development structures ▪ Role of allied health assistants
Session 5: Wellness and Resilience	▪ Leadership demands in rural practice ▪ Workforce wellbeing challenges ▪ Strategies to support resilience ▪ Sustainable practice approaches
Session 6: Facilitated Panel Discussion	▪ Insights from rural practice owners ▪ Real-world challenges and opportunities ▪ Lessons learned and practical advice

5. PROGRAM TIMELINE

The program runs over 7 weeks, with a break in week 4 when the 16th National Conference for Rural and Remote Health will take place in Coffs Harbour, NSW.

Table 1: Proposed timetable 2026

Date	Session
Wednesday, 21 October	Session 1: Introduction to Rural and Remote Allied Health
Wednesday, 28 October	Session 2: Business Sustainability
Wednesday, 4 November	Session 3: Building Service Capacity
SARRAH Conference Coffs Harbour NSW 9-11 November 2026	
Wednesday, 18 November	Session 4: Workforce planning
Wednesday, 25 November	Session 5: Wellness and Resilience
Wednesday, 2 December	Session 6: Facilitated Panel Discussion: Rural allied health practice owners share their experience and insights

6. GUEST PRESENTERS:



David Hubbard is Director of CINCH Transform, a seasoned financial strategist and transformation expert, worked with over \$3.6b NDIS, Allied Health, Foundation and Community focussed businesses providing practical actionable insights.

A purpose-driven approach, David combines deep expertise in finance, operations, and workforce dynamics to help CEOs achieve real clarity and lasting change.

David brings a unique blend of operational and financial insights into the conversation, designed to equip decision-makers with actionable steps to improve cashflow, boost efficiency, and navigate the evolving service-based business landscape, while strengthening team performance and organisational impact.



Dr Anna Moran solves problems, makes plans, loves data, and drives a taxi for four children. Also: she pokes at the parts of rural health that don't work, then rebuilds them with the people who live inside the mess.

Anna has spent twenty years across clinical practice, academia, policy and consultancy. 30+ peer-reviewed papers later, she realised that they only earn their keep if they change what happens in rural practice, not just updating a reference list. Having lived the impact of poor service design from every angle, she decided to move into health-tech and is now co-designing a care coordination platform, UNPLEXi™, alongside support workers, rural providers, allied health professionals and people with disability and chronic health conditions.

Anna is allergic to jargon and PowerPoint slides but professes she is prone to dreaming about spreadsheets and sentences she's proud of. She does Zumba badly but she does rural health design properly.

Panel participants will be announced closer to time.

7. PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

7.1. Participants

Participants are expected to:

- Commit to attending all sessions. The online sessions are recorded, however participants should aim to attend all sessions wherever possible to maximise their learning outcomes
- Participate in online interaction and engage respectfully with peers
- Apply learning in their own context
- Complete required surveys and reports that contribute to program evaluation to support continuous improvement and demonstrate program impact to funders and stakeholders.

8. SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT

Participants will receive:

- Access to session materials and resources
- Opportunities for peer discussion and connection
- Exposure to guest experts and rural practice leaders
- Follow-up communication and support where required

9. NEXT STEPS

To express interest in participating in Rural Practice Essentials:

Complete the Expression of Interest form/If you would like to proceed, please email sarrah@sarrah.org.au.

10. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW MUCH TIME DOES THE PROGRAM REQUIRE?

Participants attend one 60–90 minute session per week for six weeks.

Additional time commitment is minimal and application-based.

IS THIS A QUALIFICATION?

No. RPE is a system-informed capacity-building program, designed to support sustainable rural allied health services across business, workforce and service domains.

WHO WILL I LEARN FROM?

Facilitators include SARRAH educators, guest presenters, and rural practice owners who bring real-world insight and experience.

ABOUT SARRAH

Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH) is the national peak body representing rural and remote allied health professionals.

SARRAH works to:

- strengthen the rural allied health workforce
- improve access to allied health services
- support sustainable service delivery across Australia