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# Allied Health Rural Generalist Pathway

## National Strategy Group

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*For a nationally-recognised and accepted, sustainable and valuable rural generalist pathway for the allied health professions*

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**September 2023 – December 2025**

## **THE ALLIED HEALTH RURAL GENERALIST PATHWAY**

Australian rural and remote communities are subject to a higher burden of disease compared to metropolitan areas but have limited access to allied health services that help support individuals living with chronic disease to manage their health effectively. Workforce recruitment and retention strategies that increase access to allied health services in rural and remote Australia are important initiatives requiring the engagement of Health Ministers, Allied Health peak bodies, and key decision makers in government.

The Allied Health Rural Generalist (AHRG) Pathway is an integrated workforce, service and education strategy that has been developed collaboratively by a broad assembly of organisations across the Australian healthcare sector. The Pathway was established as a means to build the sustainability of health services, strengthen the rural workforce pipeline, and address the severe maldistribution of the Allied Health workforce affecting rural and remote Australia.

### **PURPOSE OF THE AHRG PATHWAY NATIONAL STRATEGY GROUP**

The purpose of the AHRG Pathway National Strategy Group (AHRGP-NSG) is to provide:

- a forum for collaborative oversight and to promote coordination and collaboration between stakeholder groups with an interest in the AHRGP; and
- collective advice to SARRAH as the lead organisation to support the sustainability and growth of the AHRGP nationally.

### **ROLE AND FUNCTION**

The AHRGP-NSG will be chaired by SARRAH as the lead organisation. Membership will include representatives from organisations with interest and expertise in the development and growth of the AHRG Pathway nationally. Additional members may be invited on review of the composition of the AHRGP-NSG to meet the developing needs of the group.

The role of the AHRGP-NSG is to:

- Provide expert advice to support the ongoing implementation of the AHRG Pathway nationally;
- Promote the AHRG Pathway so that allied health service providers, commissioning organisations, professional membership bodies and teaching institutions are engaged with the AHRG Pathway and aware of the purpose, benefits, and outcomes of the AHRG Pathway for the allied health professions and for rural communities.

### **REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS**

The AHRGP-NSG is sponsored by Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH) as the national peak body representing rural and remote Allied Health Professionals. The AHRGP-NSG is chaired by a representative of SARRAH. Secretariat and meeting coordination will be provided by SARRAH.

The AHRGP-NSG is a collaborative comprising representatives of individual member organisations each having their own Boards or governance agencies. Through its membership the AHRGP-NSG has links to the National Rural Health Commission, Commonwealth and state government agencies and Allied Health sector peak organisations. The AHRGP-NSG will be supported by Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH) as the national peak body representing rural and remote Allied Health Professionals.

The NSG will receive reports from the Pathway Implementation Network (PIN).

## COMMUNICATION

SARRAH will promote the activities and initiatives of the AHRGP-NSG . Regular communication of the AHRGP-NSG activities to the Commonwealth government, Health workforce and Rural workforce divisions will add visibility and a mechanism for information flow to jurisdiction governments.

SARRAH may also escalate communication and collaboration for specific periods as issues and opportunities arise.

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the AHRGP NSG comprises representation from:

Organisation
Office of the National Rural Health Commissioner
Indigenous Allied Health Australia
Allied Health Professions Australia
Australian Council of Deans of Health Sciences
National Allied Health Chief Advisors Committee
Australian Rural Health Education Network
Representative Primary Health Network
Member organisation, Rural Health Workforce Australia
Australian Rural Health Student Network
Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (Chair)

Aligned with the purpose of the AHRGP-NSG, membership must reflect a strategic approach with capacity to drive the national expansion of the AHRG Pathway.

At six-month intervals, the AHRG-NSG will undertake a review process to consider the membership composition, based on a skills audit of the needs of the AHRG-NSG.

From time to time new or temporary members will be identified through consultation with the sector and will be selected to fill a specific knowledge or stakeholder gap within the AHRGP-NSG.

## INVITEES AND SUPPORT

Persons other than Committee members may attend meetings of the NSG by invitation.

This may include industry leaders and/or stakeholders. Such invitees may take part in discussions, but have no voting rights.

Standing invitees include:

- Chief Allied Health Officer, Australia
- AHRG Accreditation Council

## CONFIDENTIALITY

AHRGP-NSG members may, on occasion, be provided with confidential material. Members are not to disclose this material to anyone outside the AHRGP-NSG and are to treat this material with the

utmost care and discretion and in accordance with terms of their confidentiality agreement. Confidential material is not to be copied, distributed, or cited.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Conflict of interest is defined as any instance where a member, partner or close family friend has a direct financial or other interest in matters under consideration or proposed matters for consideration by the AHRGP-NSG. A member must disclose to the Chair any situation that may give rise to a conflict of interest or a potential conflict of interest and seek agreement to retain the position giving rise to the conflict of interest. Where a member gains agreement to retain their position with the group, the member must not be involved in any related discussion or decision-making process.

AHRGP-NSG members must not participate in AHRGP-NSG business until the Deed of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest form has been completed.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC GROUP**

The work of the AHRGP-NSG is supported by members of the AHRGP-NSG. The Secretariat will be provided by SARRAH and will:

- develop agendas, papers and/or briefs for AHRGP-NSG meetings
- arrange meetings for the AHRGP-NSG to discuss issues
- distribute relevant information in a timely manner to promote robust discussion and feedback
- act as the central coordination point so that all members are kept informed of issues and information relevant to the work of the AHRGP-NSG

SARRAH will continue to provide secretariat support in line with the implementation of other AHRG Pathway project activities. In-kind support from member organisations may be requested to support agreed on initiatives.

## **OPERATION OF THE AHRGP-NSG**

### **The Chair**

The Chair is ultimately responsible to SARRAH for the operations of the group. The Chair will preside at all meetings.

### **Members' obligations and expectations**

1. Members are appointed for the term specified in the instrument of appointment.
2. Members are nominated for their clinical, consumer, technical or other expertise.
3. Members are to actively participate in all meetings and share information, noting that individual members may advise their organisations where appropriate.
4. Members will initially be appointed for a period of two years.
5. Individuals on the NSG will declare potential competing interests with SARRAH.
6. Members will sign a deed of confidentiality.
7. Where members have missed two consecutive meetings, it will be at the discretion of the Chair to declare the seat vacant and seek a replacement member.

### **Meetings**

It is intended that the AHRGP-NSG will meet four times per financial year. Meetings will be via teleconference or videoconference with the option for one meeting face-to-face in Canberra at the SARRAH National Office. Additional meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the Chair,

in collaboration with members if required. The proposed meetings will be scheduled according to member availability.

#### Proxies

Due to the expert nature of the AHRGP-NSG, proxies for meeting attendance cannot be accepted unless prior agreement has been negotiated with the Chair.

Members shall make every effort to attend meetings. When members are unable to attend meetings, only their agreed proxy shall attend in their absence.

#### **ENDORSEMENT**

Reviewed and endorsed by members and approved for use on 09/11/2023.