

# RAHC Update

REMOTE AREA HEALTH CORPS

Issue - 11 Summer 2010/2011 | Funded by the Australian Government

## Happy Birthday RAHC turns 2!

RAHC has celebrated its 2nd birthday in December. Since the first RAHC placement of two nurses to Ampilatwatja in early December 2008, RAHC has grown and grown thanks to the keen interest of health professionals throughout Australia (and some beyond Australia!) to be part of the effort to improve primary health services for remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

Two years on, and as of 4th December 2010, RAHC has now supported over 679 placements with more than 2443 weeks of health services delivered (equivalent to more than 50 full time professionals working a year each!).

The interest and support from the primary health services and health professionals remains strong and growing. RAHC wants to take this opportunity to thank all our supporters for helping the organisation grow and develop over the past two years. We look forward to your continued support and guidance into 2011 and hope you had a happy holiday season.

### MyRAHCExperience

Fiona Wake | RAHC Clinical Manager and Registered Nurse

RAHC's Darwin-based Clinical Manager Fiona Wake, a Registered Nurse, recently undertook some RAHC placements as a Tele-otology nurse in remote communities in the Central Desert, on Milingimbi Island and in Tennant Creek.

Fiona's placements were part of a new initiative under the Federal Government's *Closing the Gap* funding to provide remote Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) services through Tele-otology outreach programs. The aim of the new initiative is to improve ear and hearing health in Indigenous children and increase access to ENT services in the Northern Territory. Fiona visited Indigenous communities around the NT in a team of three, accompanied by an audiologist and an administrator.

With the support of the local clinics, Fiona's role included Tele-otology consultations, manually cleaning ears, taking otoscopy photographs and finally, treating any ear disease. A significant amount of time was spent educating families with pictures and stories about ear health. When asked how she enjoyed her experience, Fiona responded "It was a steep learning curve but one that has been rewarding on so many levels. I developed a passion for ear health!"

One story Fiona shared with RAHC, was her experience with a young boy who was described as unmanageable and disobedient both at school and at home. After examination, Fiona's team discovered significant hearing loss and chronic perforations. A year after initial treatment of the disease and surgery, the young boy's hearing improved significantly and is now described by his father as loving school, achieving good grades and having a better attitude at home and at school.

Fiona encourages all health professionals to consider this area of work, noting 'It is very satisfying when you return to a community and see that you have been part of making a difference.'

For more information on this program or to register your interest in this work please contact the RAHC People Placement team on 1300 MY RAHC.

**Main Photo:** Fiona Wake performs a hearing consultation in the Central Australian community of Lake Nash with RAHC Audiologist Diana Bienvenu also in attendance.



Get involved. Visit [rahc.com.au](http://rahc.com.au)

# Community Profile

## Kings Canyon

**Kings Canyon is a huge canyon in the Watarrka National Park in Central Australia, located approximately 300km west of Alice Springs.**

Watarrka National Park is an important conservation area with rock holes and gorges providing refuge for over 600 species of plants and many native animals. The sheer red rock face of Kings Canyon soars over 100 metres above dense forests of palms, ferns and cycads; sheltering them from the surrounding desert conditions.

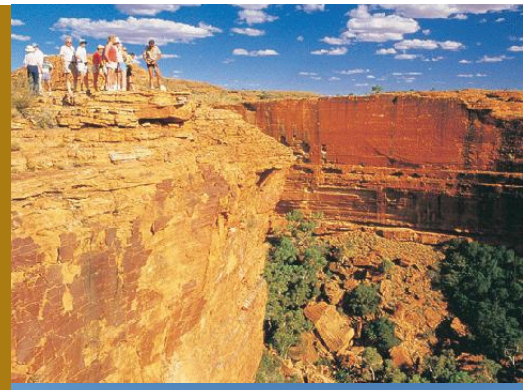
Derived from an Aboriginal word referring to the umbrella bush that thrives there, Watarrka National Park has been home to the Luritja people for more than 20,000 years. The area was little known to Europeans until explorer Ernest Giles visited the area in 1872.

The dialect of Luritja spoken in this region is referred to as Southern Luritja. While it is quite similar to Papunya Luritja, it shows notable differences as it had been derived mostly from Pitjantjatjara as well as being influenced by Antakarinya and the more southern varieties of Arrernte. The permanent population in the Kings Canyon area is approximately 400.

The Health Centre at Kings Canyon has two registered nurses and caters for up to 200 Indigenous people living in six outstations and 150 – 200 non-Indigenous residents. In addition to the residents there are up to 300,000 visitors to the national park each year.

Accommodation for health professionals working in the health centre is in a two bedroom house.

Canyon image courtesy of: [www.australiantraveller.com](http://www.australiantraveller.com)



## Urgent positions to be filled

RAHC has opportunities for health professionals to work in communities throughout the Northern Territory. Some of the more urgent needs at the time of printing this newsletter are below:

### General Practitioners Various Locations

1. An experienced GP is required short-term in the Central Australian communities of Yuendumu, Willowra and Nyirripi.
2. An experienced GP is required in Borroloola from 24/1/11 - 4/2/11.

Contact RAHC for more information on these positions.

### Registered Nurses Various Locations

RAHC urgently requires Registered Nurses to fill short-term positions in both Central Australian and Top End remote communities. Placements are from 3-12 weeks. Visit [rahc.com.au](http://rahc.com.au) for more information on these positions.

### Dentist & Dental Assistant Team Tennant Creek

An experienced Dentist and Dental Assistant are required for on-going short-term placements in Tennant Creek. This opportunity would ideally suit friends or partners.

Contact RAHC on 1300 MYRAHC  
or visit [rahc.com.au](http://rahc.com.au)

## RAHC Online Training Update

Since launching the RAHC Introduction to Remote Health Practice Program (Online) in early February 2010 over 173 health professionals have completed one or more of the available modules.

Overall, there have been 399 modules completed: 125 Introduction to Indigenous Health; 66 Communication and Education; 59 Chronic Disease Management; 39 Mental Health; 30 Paediatrics; 10 Maternity; 35 Major Incident Management and 35 Managing Medical Emergencies.

New modules including a Dental Health and Trachoma module will be launched in 2011. Stay tuned...



## Certificate of Appreciation Awarded

Congratulations to RAHC registered nurse, Alan Wilson who recently received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Anyinginyi Health Centre in Tennant Creek.

Alan has undertaken seven RAHC placements at Anyinginyi since June 2009 and has built a strong rapport and friendships with the local community and health centre staff.