

MyRAHCExperience

Gerry Little | Dentist

Dr Gerry Little is a Dentist working in private practise in Toowoomba and recently undertook a three week RAHC placement in Borrooloola on the Macarthur River. Gerry became interested in working in remote Indigenous oral health because he believes "we need to fix Australia's own backyard first" and he had a curiosity to work in the Northern Territory (NT), a part of Australia he had never visited before.

Gerry's RAHC adventure began with one day of cultural training and another day of clinical orientation with the NT Oral Health Service in Darwin. Gerry then set off on a two hour flight in a light aircraft to his remote destination. On arrival in Borrooloola Gerry and his Dental Assistant Carol, spent half a day moving and unpacking dental equipment in the Borrooloola Health Centre to ensure the surgery was ready to see patients for his next 11 days of work. During this time Gerry and Carol had 88 appointments and treated 80 members of the community. Overall, 276 treatments were administered with 44 extractions and the placing of 94 restorations.

During his placement the annual Borrooloola Rodeo was held and Gerry met many local people and others who had travelled great distances from Queensland and Western Australia to be there. It was here he met Dennis, the rodeo clown, who ended up being Gerry's last patient of his RAHC placement. Gerry, being a surfer, was also able to get to the Gulf of Carpentaria during his time off and put his toes in the water at Bing Bong.

Gerry describes his overall RAHC placement as, 'A wonderful experience, the patients were great and I will definitely do it again'. When discussing Indigenous health outcomes and practice in the NT, Gerry says, "The need is desperate and I know I only scratched the surface with what I did, but the more people who go, the more gets done. I would encourage you to accept the challenge to help improve the oral health of Australians in remote Australia."



International Nurses Day - May 12

RAHC is celebrating International Nurses Day to acknowledge the contribution made by every nurse to the health of society.

Along with GPs, allied health and dental professionals, RAHC recruits and supports urban based nurses and midwives to fill short term paid placements in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory (NT). Since RAHC was first established 51% of all health professionals that have been placed by RAHC are registered nurses.

The theme for International Nurses Day this year is **Closing the Gap: Increasing access and equality**. RAHC nurses contribute to this theme by assisting in the expansion of primary health care service delivery. RAHC nurses provide support to the hard working staff in remote health centres, enabling permanent staff to take leave or undertake professional development as required. As recognised by the International Council of Nurses, nurses have an important role to reduce health inequities.

To date RAHC placements have contributed to over 3145 weeks of additional primary health care service being undertaken in remote NT health centres. This equates to more than 78 full time health professionals working per year in the NT.

Happy International Nurses Day to our RAHC nurses - your contribution to improving Indigenous health outcomes is much appreciated.



Community Profile

Ali Curung, Barkly Region

Ali Curung has a population of approximately 500 people and is located 380kms north east of Alice Springs in the Southern Barkly region, just south of the Devils Marbles.

The term Ali Curung is Kaiditch meaning country of the dog, dog area or dog dreaming. It refers to an area of land visited by ancestral dogs during their travels around the country.

Ali Curung was established in 1956 under the original name, 'Warrabri Settlement'. The first groups to arrive in the settlement were the Warlpirri and Warumungu people. 'Warrabri Settlement' became Ali Curung in 1978 when administration transferred from the government to the Ali Curung Community Council. The community has an AFL team which competes in the Barkly Australian Football League. The Women's Art and Craft Centre supports several well-known Central Desert artists.

The Ali Curung Health Centre is managed by the NT Department of Health and consists of several doctors and nurses.

Images courtesy of <http://www.lgant.asn.au/infrastructure/photo-gallery/ali-curung-sports-recreation-hall-cici>



RAHC Board visits Central Australia

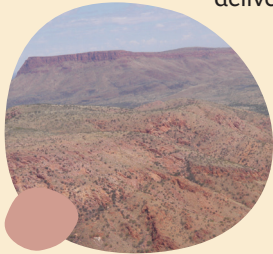
The RAHC Board is committed to understanding the environment in which health professionals are working, and to this end, the April RAHC Board meeting recently took place in Alice Springs.

Members of the Board were also able to incorporate a trip to Kintore, a remote Aboriginal community more than 500kms west of Alice Springs, into their visit. This trip provided the board with a fantastic opportunity to meet with community members and health professionals who are working to deliver better health outcomes for the people of Kintore.



Board members also enjoyed meeting with and learning from a broad array of stakeholders in Central Australia during their visit.

Photo (L to R): Dr James Ross - RAHC Medical Director, Leon Chapman - Kintore Health Centre Manager, Dr Tony Austin - RAHC Chairman, Paul Ekin-Smyth - RAHC Director, Renee Martin - RAHC Governance and Reporting Manager, Jenny Moore - RAHC Central Australia Regional Coordinator, Jawad Hayder - RAHC Finance Manager & Philip Roberts - RAHC Acting General Manager (front).



Update on RAHC online Introduction to Training Program

RAHC online clinical training modules, designed especially for health professionals working or preparing to work in remote health clinics and services in Indigenous communities in the NT, have been attracting a lot of interest.

Since January 1 this year, 609 modules have been completed by 288 health professionals. From these 288, just over 10% of health professionals, have completed 4 or more modules.

The suite of learning modules is freely available to RAHC and other interested health professionals.

Jump online today to check out one or all of the nine modules available at www.rahc.com.au/training

Our Ear Health module is coming very soon!

Is RAHC coming to an expo near you?

In the month of May RAHC will be busy visiting Wollongong, Melbourne, the Gold Coast and Sydney for dental, nursing and general practitioner expos and conferences. Come find us at our exhibition booth so we can answer your questions or have a chat and provide you with more information.

NSW Oral Health Convention
11-12 May, Wollongong

RCNA – Nursing & Health Expo
15 May, Melbourne

GPCE 2011
20-22 May, Sydney

Broadening Horizons 2011
Australian Association of Maternal, Child & Family Health Nurses
20-21 May, Gold Coast

RCNA – National Nursing & Health Conference
25-27 May, Sydney