

# RAHC Update

REMOTE AREA HEALTH CORPS

Issue Three August 2009 | Funded by the Australian Government



Be part of the effort to improve Indigenous health

We need doctors, nurses, dental and allied health professionals to fill short-term placements in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. Placements are paid and from as little as three weeks.

## Health Minister opens new RAHC Darwin Office

The Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP, has officially opened the new Darwin RAHC office and launched a *Certificate of Appreciation* to be given to all health professionals completing a primary health care placement in the Northern Territory.

Ms Roxon noted that this occasion followed the recent milestone of RAHC's 100th placement. "The Remote Area Health Corps was established with funding from the Federal Government in order to expand and strengthen primary health services for remote Indigenous communities in the NT and to give urban-based professionals the opportunity to contribute to closing the gap."

Ms Roxon officially opened the new RAHC office in Darwin which serves as an anchor for the organization's NT operations and supports client liaison and strategic partnerships. While visiting the Darwin office, Ms Roxon signed the first of the *Certificates of Appreciation* and presented them to Ms Marion Brand and Dr David Marris (pictured above), two health professionals who have recently completed RAHC health placements.

"It is a pleasure to acknowledge and thank the health professionals who are taking up this opportunity and providing support to the health services across the NT. We want to see many more health professionals respond to this opportunity and become part of a growing effort to strengthen and expand health services in remote communities throughout the NT."

Ms Marion Brand is a Registered Nurse who has completed two RAHC placements and is planning to undertake more. Dr David Marris is a New Zealand trained doctor who has completed placements at the Galiwin'ku health center on Elcho Island and the Mutitjulu health centre at Uluru.

Ms Brand commented that work in remote communities was both rewarding and challenging and enabled her to use her professional skills while learning about Australia's own Indigenous people and cultures.

"I cannot imagine a more satisfying and wonderful way to make a difference." Marion Brand, RN & RAHC Participant

## Placement Update

RAHC is now servicing over 35 communities throughout the Northern Territory. (see map below)

Many of these communities have utilised the services of RAHC for repeat placements, with a number of health professionals becoming so attached to the communities they visit they are planning to return regularly to the area for continuity of care.

As of July 31 2009, 118 health professionals have completed or commenced RAHC placements, with another 30 placements confirmed for the coming weeks and months. A total of 401 weeks of health care service by RAHC health professionals has been delivered to remote Indigenous communities since December 2008.



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# Community Profile

Mutitjulu, Uluru NT

The community of Mutitjulu is located at the base of Uluru (Ayers Rock), 455kms south west of Alice Springs. The population of Mutitjulu is approximately 400 people.

The Yankunytjatjara & Anangu people are the areas traditional owners. The Anangu people were nomadic, travelling in small family groups across the land which is now the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and western desert for many thousands of years. Uluru and Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) were first mapped by Europeans in the 1870s during the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line.

Mutitjulu Aboriginal Community Corporation was formed in 1974 and paved the way for the establishment of the community of Mutitjulu. The community controlled health centre is managed with the assistance of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC).

RAHC has placed 5 health professionals at the Mutitjulu clinic since the beginning of 2009, including our 100th Placement, Kym Bramberger, a Registered Nurse from South Australia.

Kym, who has finished her time at Mutitjulu says, "I first heard about RAHC through friends of mine who were on other placements with RAHC."

"I have worked in a number of remote Indigenous communities and small country hospitals in South Australia but I always wanted to work in the Northern Territory. I love working with Indigenous people, and getting paid to live and work right next to Uluru is such a bonus," says Kym.

Kym has loved getting to know the people and the health staff in the Mutitjulu community. "It's been so great to learn from the local health staff- they have so much experience."

Mutitjulu has a primary school, store, health clinic, respite aged care facility, police station and child care facility.

Source: [www.caac.org.au/profiles\\_remote\\_communities.html](http://www.caac.org.au/profiles_remote_communities.html)



Kym Bramberger, RN & 100th RAHC Placement, taking in the Uluru sunset.

Mutitjulu is situated on the eastern side on Uluru

## RAHC Team Member

### Luke Gosling

Regional Manager NT, RAHC Darwin Office

After serving with the Australian Defence Force for 11 years Luke worked in Australia and overseas in non-government organisations and in advisor capacities. This work, primarily in developing countries, introduced him to maternal health programs and community development in general. Luke has been involved in Indigenous advocacy and jumped at the opportunity to make a contribution to improved health outcomes for Indigenous Australians through his position as the Manager of RAHC in the Northern Territory.

"Meeting health professionals from around Australia and the community members from all over the NT is a privilege. Working to align expectations and understanding between these groups of culturally diverse Australians is the most rewarding part of the job," says Luke.

"RAHC has already made many friends around the Territory and I have found that people enjoy seeing new faces in their community. More than this though, they like to see these faces return, this builds familiarity and trust which is important in delivering improved health outcomes."



## Allied Health Professionals Needed

RAHC is currently seeking allied health professionals from the following areas to fill short-term vacancies in remote Indigenous communities across the Northern Territory:

- Physiotherapists
- Speech Pathologists
- Occupational Therapists
- Podiatrist
- Audiologists



Placements are paid and from as little as three weeks. Cultural and clinical training is provided.

General Practitioners, Registered Nurses, and Dental health professionals are also needed.

For more information on specific positions or to see all our vacancies visit our website [rahc.com.au](http://rahc.com.au)