



RESEARCH PLAN (2019-2020)

This plan has been developed for 2019 – 2020 with objectives of consolidating and extending our leadership in rural health research and related capacity-building and engagement initiatives across our footprint.

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LIVE, STUDY, WORK *in Rural Australia*

In Association



Introduction

The Three Rivers University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) embedded within Charles Sturt University in South Western NSW was established in 2017. It is funded to conduct rural health research within the scope of the Commonwealth Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) program. The Three Rivers UDRH is in a position to become a lead driver of rural health research through our location, funding and networks.

This document outlines our second research plan and maps current research activities that have been implemented during the establishment phase. Building on initial work, the plan also provides a vision for research activities over the longer-term and the associated outcomes and impacts that will be generated.

Research has been identified as being core to the activity of the UDRH to evaluate the outcomes of the UDRH and to pursue activities that can impact positively on the rural health outcomes of rural communities in the Three Rivers footprint.

Impact goals:

- Developing and researching innovative health service practices which lead to healthier rural communities
- Researching education innovation for rural health professionals which leads to a highly informed and skilled rural health workforce
- Conduct research focusing on policy and practices that contribute to building health and resilience in rural communities

Principles which underpin the conduct of research by the UDRH

- The Three Rivers UDRH has clear research priorities that align with the CSU Research Narrative ([see Appendix 1](#)).
- Research is based on collaboration and integration across health, social and education sectors with mutual respect for contribution.
- Research includes a developmental and mentoring element for early career and community-based researchers.
- Research is co-designed and co-produced with stakeholders.
- Research contributes to building the evidence base in relevant scholarly fields and generating useable outcomes for partners and communities
- Research should have a return on investment to the UDRH in the form of knowledge reach, partner and stakeholder engagement, influence and impact on behaviours, systems and policies through knowledge translation activities.

Personnel responsible for delivering the research in this plan are:

- Three Rivers UDRH staff with dedicated research-only roles: Senior Principal Research Fellow (1.0EFT); Research Fellow (0.9EFT); Research Associate: Support and Knowledge Transfer (0.4EFT); and an Indigenous Engagement and Research Associate (0.5EFT).
- Other Three Rivers UDRH academic staff whose workload has a 30% research component (five full-time staff and two part-time staff).
- External stakeholders interested in pursuing research priorities in collaboration with Three Rivers UDRH.

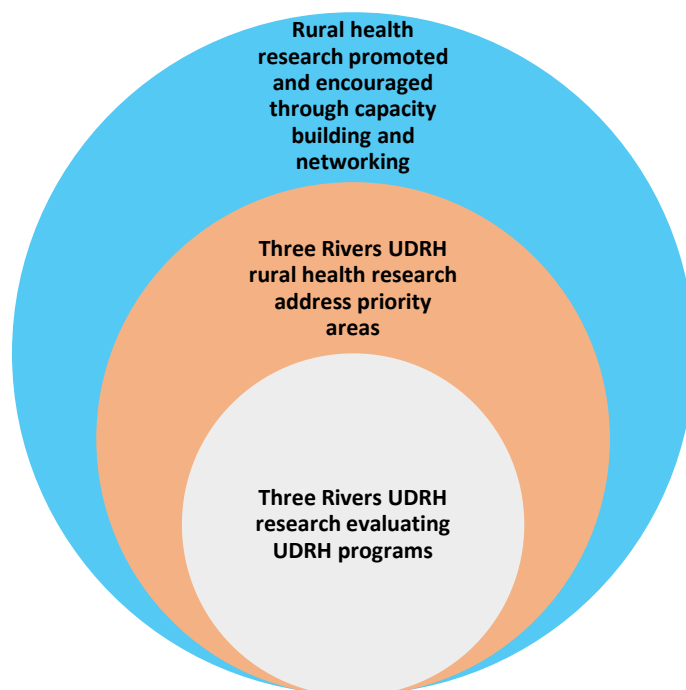


Figure 1 Model of foci of research activity

Strategic long term priority areas for research activity (directed by the RHMT parameters)

1. Rural health workforce development (including increasing rural-origin and Indigenous students studying health professions courses, and workforce recruitment and retention strategies)
2. Rural training strategies
3. Innovative rural service delivery models to enable the provision of health services to meet community needs
4. Health issues directly impacting on rural people, with a focus on benefiting communities within the University's catchment area through the delivery of better health services
5. Improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Research activities currently underway

Current projects	Alignment with UDRH research parameters	Timeline
MyPlacement Project: understanding student's experiences of 'non-metropolitan' placements	Rural training strategies	Ongoing in 2020
Who goes on rural health placements where? A case study of undergraduate health professions courses at a regional university	Rural training strategies	To be completed in 2019
Pathways to and through tertiary study: a case study of students enrolled in health courses at CSU	Rural health workforce development	To be completed in 2019
Community conversations: two demonstration studies (phase 1)	Health issues directly impacting on rural people, with a focus on benefiting communities	Ongoing in 2020
Evaluation of the Little Health Teams clinics: community team-based care	Health issues directly impacting on rural people	To be completed in 2019
Facilitating the support and settlement of refugee survivors in Wagga Wagga: integrating service-provider and community perspectives	Health issues directly impacting on rural people	To be completed in 2019
Show us what it's like: using images to explore students' experiences of rural placements	Rural training strategies	To be completed in 2019
From undergraduate to newgraduate to postgraduate: what influences early career nurses to practice in rural areas?	Rural health workforce development	Ongoing in 2020
Identifying the barriers to the uptake of telehealth (scoping review)	Innovative rural service delivery models to meet community needs	To be completed in 2019

Emerging areas for research activities in 2019-2020

The following issues are identified as a focus for research for the next two years. This will be in addition to responding to emerging opportunities for research development and collaboration relevant to our strategic long term priority areas.

Issue to be explored	Alignment with UDRH research parameters	Timeline
Factors promoting Indigenous student success in health professions studies	Rural health workforce development and improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	To commence in 2019
Responding to Indigenous community priorities for health research	Rural health workforce development and improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	To commence in 2019 and ongoing in 2020
Exploring new service learning models for rural clinical placements	Rural training strategies	Planning phase 2019 to commence in 2020
Contexts and factors for understanding and improving the mental health of rural people	Health issues directly impacting on rural people and Innovative rural service delivery models	Planning phase 2019 to commence in 2020
Tracking the careers of rural-trained health professions graduates	Rural health workforce development	Planning phase 2019 to commence in 2020

Research capacity-building initiatives for 2019-2020

1. Maintain involvement in current research networks associated with LHDs, PHNs, Western Health Research Network (WHRN) and other affiliations across the Three Rivers footprint to identify opportunities for collaboration and to support and promote research endeavours that align with our research priorities.
2. Continue to develop the confidence and skills of early career researchers, students and community partners to be involved in co-produced rural research through the provision of innovative bespoke research professional development modules.
3. Ongoing support for staff to be involved in research professional development opportunities provided by CSU and to contribute to the development and refinement of professional development activities to meet the needs of rural health researchers.

4. Provide skills and support for Three Rivers academic staff to publish research findings in high profile, peer-review journals and involvement in other dissemination activities.
5. Establish a conference support scheme for HDR students across CSU whose work address rural health issues to travel and present their work at an Australian conference (two travel scholarships per year will be offered).

Research engagement activities for 2019-2020

1. Continue to develop a 'Critical Conversations' series involving high-profile speakers from fields relevant to rural health and which are open to university, partner organisations, research stakeholders and community members to attend (two events per year at different sites across the Three Rivers footprint).
2. Continue to host regular 'Conversation Circle' panel events focusing on research-related issues and topics (three to four per year across the Three Rivers footprint).
3. Contribute to building the profile of the Three Rivers UDRH monthly newsletter by producing regular 'think pieces' discussing research-related issues and contribute pieces to other forums discussing rural health issues.
4. Deliver community engagement activities for developing projects and disseminating research findings.

Research governance activities for 2019-2020

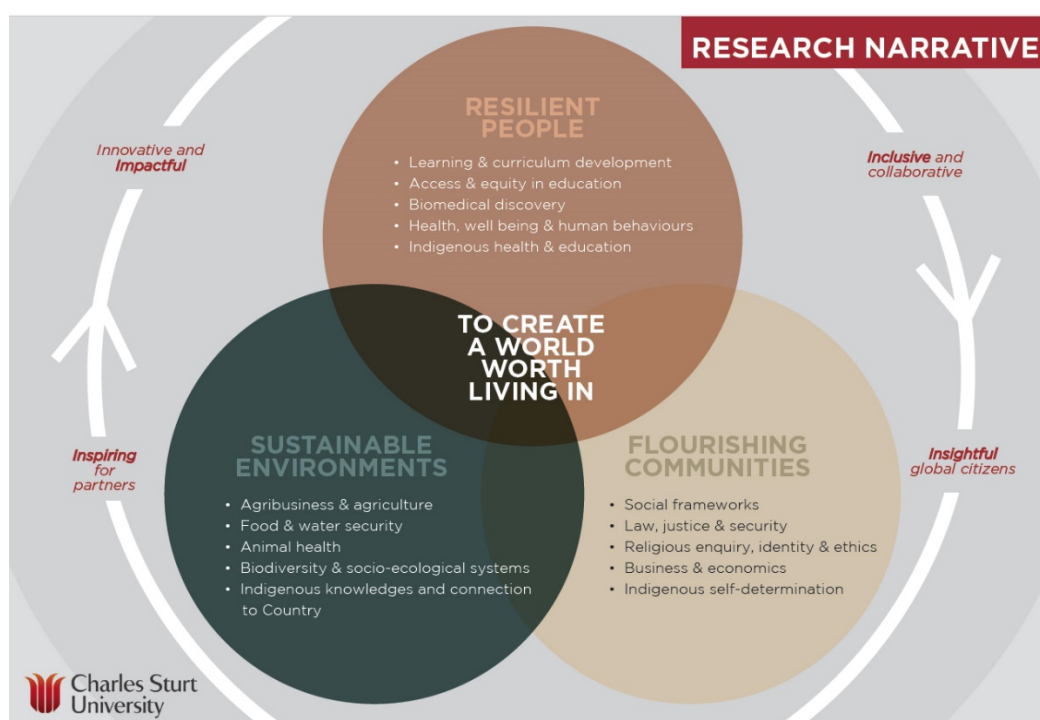
1. A **Research Advisory Board** has been established and will meet three times a year. An extract from the Terms of References explains that the Research Advisory Board:
 - Provides advice and guidance in implementing the Three Rivers UDRH research plan and developing subsequent research plans
 - Shares knowledge with the UDRH to assist with leading and participating in high quality research projects and alliances
 - Guides and advise on the design, conduct and evaluation of projects to lead to successful program outcomes
 - Proposes strategic uses of funding
 - Supports the development of submissions for additional funding
 - Guides and advise on programs of activity for research capacity building
 - Assists with the connection to stakeholders and guide strategies to broker a research network that leads to enhanced research activity
 - Promotes the Three Rivers UDRH
 - Participates where possible in events to promote research outcomes from the UDRH.

2. A **Three Rivers Research Committee** has been established and meets monthly to provide guidance and oversight of:
 - The development of internal research-related guidelines at Three Rivers
 - Reporting to the CSU Faculty of Science Research Committee
 - Identifying opportunities and needs for research
 - Processes for assessing the merit of research proposals submitted to Three Rivers for funding and support
 - Provide informed, regular advice to ensure the satisfactory and timely progress of research projects led by Three Rivers academic staff
 - Advise on appropriate research dissemination activities and opportunities.

3. Ongoing engagement to establish '**Research Circles**' involving Aboriginal Elders and organisations across the Three Rivers footprint to advise and guide Three Rivers research involving Indigenous people. We are currently seeking community advice on structures and processes for these groups and meetings. The aim is for Research Circles to facilitate the co-design and co-production of research involving Aboriginal people and provide Aboriginal governance of Three Rivers research involving Aboriginal people.

4. The Senior Principal Research Fellow (Professor Deborah Warr) is a member of the Steering Committee for the Western Health Research Network (WRHN) and the Murrumbidgee Local Health District Research Network.

APPENDIX 1: CSU Research Narrative



CSU RESEARCH NARRATIVE 2017 (RN17)

“to create a world worth living in”

Charles Sturt University is operating in a paradigm of research excellence and partnership. We will provide meaningful outcomes for industry, government, business, and communities. We seek to make an impact on our worlds – regional, national and global – and contribute to their economic, social and environmental sustainability and well-being.

Three interdisciplinary research spheres have been identified to encapsulate our research activity.

RESILIENT PEOPLE

This encapsulates research that contributes to the development of educated, healthy, resilient people. It will include our 2015 reported 2 digit Field of Research codes

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 11 Medical and Health Sciences | 16 Studies in Human Society |
| 13 Education | 17 Psychology and Cognitive Sciences |

FLOURISHING COMMUNITIES

This encapsulates research that contributes to developing communities that will be thriving economically, with strong social frameworks, and where diversity and harmony reside. It will include our 2015 reported 2 digit Field of Research codes

- | | |
|---|---|
| 08 Information and Computing | 19 Creative Arts and Writing |
| 14 Economics | 20 Language, Communication and Culture |
| 15 Commerce, Management Tourism and Services | 21 History and Archaeology |
| | 22 Philosophy and Religious Studies |

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTS

This encapsulates research that contributes to the development of sustainable solutions in agriculture and water resources while enhancing the biodiversity of our environments and strengthening ecosystems. It will include our 2015 reported 2 digit Field of Research codes

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 05 Environmental Sciences | 07 Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences |
| 06 Biological Sciences | 09 Engineering |

The research spheres are interlocking to indicate the interdisciplinary nature of our research. Similarly, the Field of Research codes are not fixed to one sphere: there will be deliberate cross-fertilisation across the three spheres through collaboration innovation, and co-investment.

Our research is performed in a broader context, and at CSU, we accept the responsibility to undertake research consistent with our values. In our research efforts we will be

- Innovative and **Impactful**
- **Inspiring** for Partners
- **Insightful** Global Citizens
- **Inclusive** and Collaborative

RN17 is aligned with the University 2017-2022 Strategy in delivering impactful, solution-driven research that reflects our existing areas of strength and tackles new challenges. RN17 will have greater import for investment and recruitment at CSU. It will drive research investment decisions, research staff recruitment activities, and HDR recruitment and scholarship support.

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor
(Research, Development and Industry)


**Charles Sturt
University**