



## STATEMENT

### ARHEN WELCOMES NEW COMMONWEALTH CHIEF ALLIED HEALTH OFFICER

9 July 2020 – The peak body for Australia’s 16 University Departments of Rural Health (UDRH) today welcomed the appointment of a new Commonwealth Chief Allied Health Officer to help drive critical workforce reforms.

[ARHEN](#) represents 16 UDRHs located in rural and remote areas in all States and the NT. UDRHs work to address bush health workforce shortages which affect some 7 million people who live and work in these locations. Each UDRH supports nursing and allied health students to undertake clinical training placements so they experience the many career and lifestyle opportunities that exist outside capital cities.

The appointment of Dr Anne-marie Boxall to the role of Chief Allied Health Officer (CAHO) was announced today by Health Minister Greg Hunt and Regional Health Minister Mark Coulton.

It follows the recommendation made by the former Rural Health Commissioner, Prof Paul Worley, as part of his report into improving access, quality and distribution of allied health care in rural and remote Australia which was handed to the government in late June. A new Rural Health Commissioner, Assoc Prof Ruth Stewart, was appointed last week.

ARHEN applauds the government’s prompt action in appointing Dr Boxall, who trained as a physiotherapist and has worked in health policy in the public and private sectors for more than 10 years.

Dr Boxall’s responsibilities will include addressing shortages of allied health professionals in rural and remote locations across Australia.

ARHEN has represented UDRHs for more than 20 years to boost the supply of allied health professionals in these locations and looks forward to working closely with Dr Boxall to continue finding innovative solutions.

Allied health services are especially important in rural and remote areas where levels of chronic illness are higher and health outcomes worse compared with capital city and surrounding locations. Shortages are caused by complex barriers such as recruiting, training and a lack of career pathways.

UDRHs address these issues, working with and for their local communities to identify healthcare gaps and providing solutions such as student led clinics and school-based services. Many also focus on developing pathways into healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to increase the supply of a culturally safe and responsive workforce.

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