



**UNIVERSITY CENTRE
FOR RURAL HEALTH
NORTH COAST**
education research workforce

MEDIA RELEASE

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UCRH's New Year will see further expansion of regional ties

Following another successful year partnering with regional health organisations, the University Centre for Rural Health is set to further expand its role in developing health care capacity across the North Coast, according to UCRH Director Professor Ross Bailie.

"The year ahead will see us drawing further on the expertise of our highly regarded research team and coordinating the practical training of more university students from medical, nursing and allied health programs," Prof Bailie said.

UCRH has already developed strong links with the region's key health bodies, Northern NSW Local Health District and the North Coast Primary Health Network, and is looking to collaborate closely with other relevant groups in the coming year.

"During 2016 our research team has been involved with a wide range of research of both local and national importance, ranging from the health impacts of hazard-reduction smoke around Sydney to the risks of improper condom usage by young people attending music festivals.

"You can't get more diverse than those examples, yet both are serious health issues that our researchers helped to identify.

"The UCRH research team has been recognised with major grants and awards in focus areas including Aboriginal health, chronic diseases, mental health, ageing, substance misuse and the role of integrated care planning in keeping people out of hospital, or shortening their inpatient stay," Prof Bailie said.

"While UCRH has a relatively low public profile, our work has real significance for the region. This includes our role in coordinating clinical placements for health care students who work for periods up to a year in local hospitals, GP practices, Aboriginal medical services and community health.

"The feedback from both long and short-stay students shows they enjoy getting away from the city to this appealing area, and connecting well with their supervising clinicians, patients and clients, and the broader community.

"This taste of rural health care not only benefits them but also our region, as many are choosing to return here to work after they have fully graduated," Prof Bailie said.

"This is a positive contribution to strengthening the health care workforce in a key regional area, which benefits everyone."

As an important employer, UCRH has an 85-strong team at its campuses in Lismore, Murwillumbah and Grafton, with significant investment in developing purpose-built student accommodation in Ballina, and an increasing extension of programs in other towns in the region.

The UCRH is primarily a collaboration between The University of Sydney, Southern Cross University, the University of Wollongong and the University of Western Sydney. It also works with a range of other universities to support rural health education and research.

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