

CRANA CONFERENCE 2026

Practice-Ready for Remote Nursing

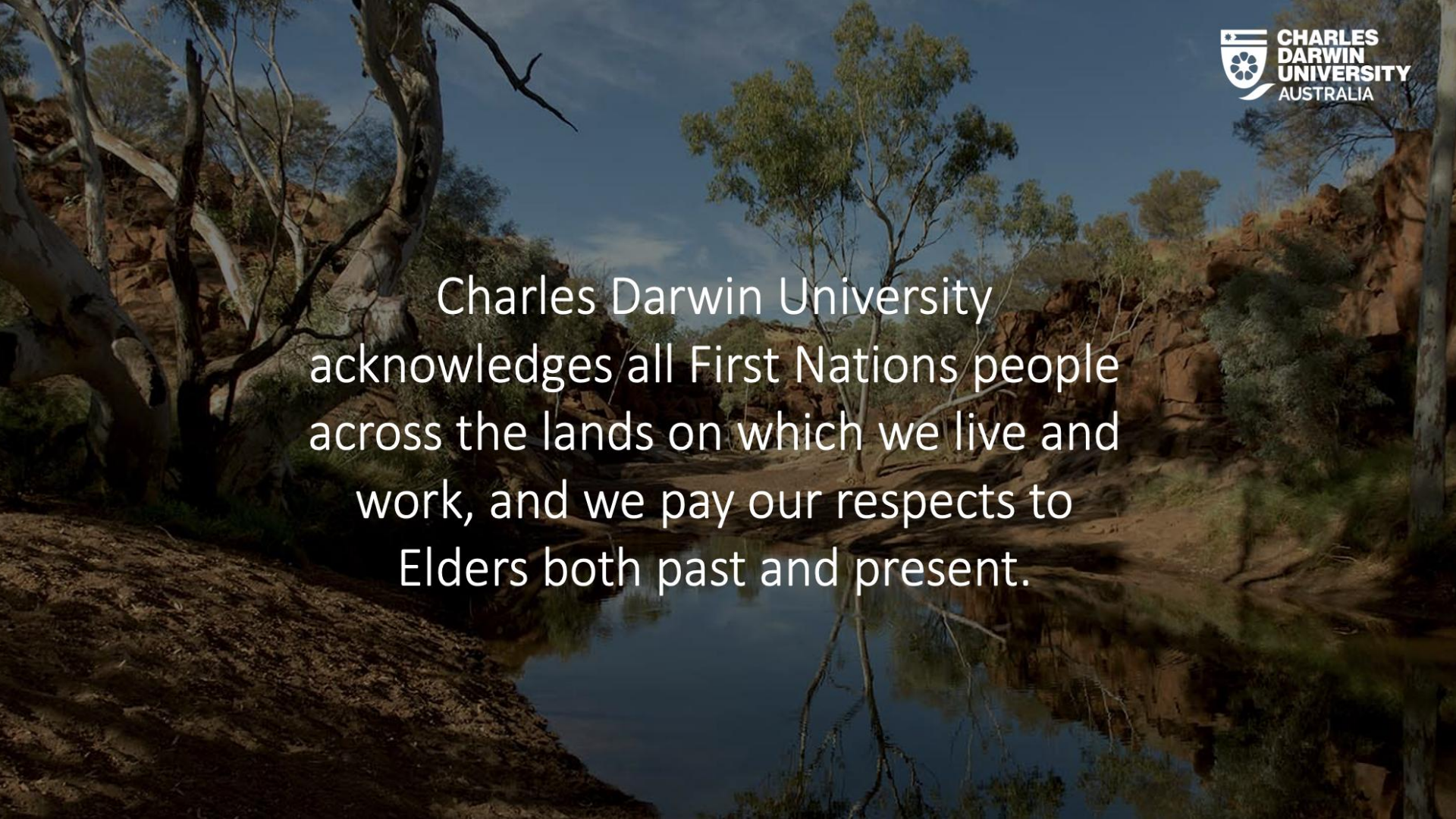
Postgraduate Education in
Primary Health Care

Mrs Sarah Mills • Mr David Fisher
Charles Darwin University



Graduate Certificate in
Remote Primary
Health Care Practice

CDU



Charles Darwin University
acknowledges all First Nations people
across the lands on which we live and
work, and we pay our respects to
Elders both past and present.

Graduate Certificate of Primary Health Care Practice

URBAN STREAM

Supporting nurses working in urban primary health care settings across Australia.

★ REMOTE STREAM

Preparing nurses for the unique demands of remote primary health care across Australia - today's focus.

CDU is passionate about delivering excellent care throughout Australia - and particularly in the Northern Territory.

Why Remote Nursing Needs Specialised Preparation



Workforce Gap

Remote communities face chronic nursing shortages — experienced nurses must be ready to work independently from day one.



High Stakes

Remote nurses often work in isolation, far from specialist backup. Clinical errors in assessment carry serious consequences.



Inquisitive Thinking

The 'sore finger' could be sepsis. Every presentation demands deeper questioning, pattern recognition, and safe escalation.



Framework Aligned

Built on the National Rural & Remote Generalist Framework — ensuring graduates meet recognised workforce standards.

Preparing Nurses for Day-to-Day Remote Practice

NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR

- MEC (Medicines & Emergency Care)
- REC (Remote Emergency Care)
- Specialised emergency training programs
- Supervised clinical placements



WHAT IT PROVIDES

- Confidence in daily remote clinical encounters
- Inquisitive assessment skills — beyond the presenting complaint
- Interprofessional learning
- Cultural & contextual considerations for remote communities
- Skills to plan and implement nurse-led health promotion programs

"The Sore Finger" — More Than Meets the Eye

Presenting
Complaint



*"My finger
is sore"*



🔍 Local Infection / Paronychia

🔍 Sepsis — systemic spread

🔍 Fracture

🔍 Domestic Violence — defensive injury

🔍 STI

Inquisitive thinking is the core skill — this course builds that reflex.

COURSE STRENGTHS

Graduate Certificate in Remote Primary Health Care Practice



Inquisitive Assessment

Builds the habit of thinking beyond the presenting complaint



Cultural Safety

Grounded in culturally safe communication within remote communities



RAN Model of Consult

Structured framework for safe clinical decision-making



Acute & Chronic Care

Managing both urgent and complex ongoing presentations



Social Determinants

Understanding what really drives health in remote settings



Health programs

Developing project design and planning skills to implement.

Alice Springs Simulation



Remote Maternity
Scenarios



RAN Model
of Consult



Acute & Chronic
Presentations



Culturally Safe
Communication



Social Determinants
of Health



Aboriginal Controlled
Medical Services



Why Alice Springs?

Authentic remote setting. Unfamiliar environment. Real exposure to rural/remote context — by design.

3-Day Intensive

- Inquiry-based learning
- Case-based discussions
- Practical simulation
- Interprofessional learning
- Aboriginal Controlled Health Service

Royal Flying Doctor Service



Connecting Remote Communities

Students visit the RFDS Alice Springs base to understand the critical role of aeromedical services in remote health delivery.

Key learning points:

- Aeromedical retrieval and patient preparation
- Communication and handover across vast distances
- Understanding when and how to escalate to RFDS
- The nurse's role before the aircraft arrives



Catching a Baby - Remote Maternity Care in Practice



Why it matters

- Remote birth can happen without warning
- Closest obstetric support may be hours away
- Simulation builds muscle memory & confidence

Antenatal Assessment in Remote Primary Health Care



Fundal Height, Fetal Position & More

Remote area nurses often provide the sole antenatal care for women in their communities. The simulation intensive covers:

- Fundal height measurement and interpretation
- Fetal heart auscultation
- Recognising risk — when to escalate
- Culturally appropriate antenatal communication
- Documentation for remote handover to RFDS or hospital

Learning in Place — Purple House



Purple House (WDFP)

Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation — Purple House — is the only Aboriginal-owned and operated dialysis service in Australia.

Students visit to understand:

- The burden of end-stage renal disease in remote communities
- ACMS model of community-controlled care
- The nurse's role in early detection and prevention

Strengthening Remote Nursing Knowledge



Student Feedback

*"Highly valuable preparation
for remote practice"*

Students reported stronger assessment skills, greater confidence in clinical decision-making, and deeper understanding of the remote context.

KEY OUTCOMES

- Sharper inquisitive assessment beyond the presenting complaint
- Improved clinical reasoning in remote, low-resource settings
- Confidence in essential antenatal and maternity care
- Strengthened culturally safe practice with remote communities
- Greater confidence working independently as a remote area nurse

Graduate Certificate of Primary Health Care Nursing (Remote)

This program doesn't replace MEC or REC - it fills the vital space in between: preparing nurses to think clearly, assess deeply, and act safely in the everyday complexity of remote practice.

From catching babies to visiting Purple House and the RFDS, CDU students don't just learn about remote health online - they have a taste of it.

Sarah Mills | David Fisher | cdu.edu.au | find out more by scanning the QR code:

