

# ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

## 2017 NSW RURAL HEALTH AND RESEARCH CONGRESS

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**Concurrent Stream:** Culture and Health

**Keywords:** Aboriginal Health and Workforce

**Abstract Title:** Culturally respectful health care and findings from participant evaluations.

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**Background:** Providing culturally appropriate services is critical in enhancing healthcare accessibility and acceptability for Aboriginal people in rural and remote Australia. Significant State and Federal investments support the provision of cultural education for practising health professionals and pre-registration health students undertaking clinical placements within this context. Aboriginal Staff within the University Departments of Rural Health contribute significantly to the provision of culturally respectful healthcare.

**Approach:** The Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health works collaboratively with the Far West Local Health District to provide cultural education to existing and new health professionals in the region. The Department also has carriage of education delivery to all health students undertaking their clinical placements across the District where communities have a significant proportion of Aboriginal residents. The approach includes problem-based learning case scenarios that present authentic and contemporary issues confronting Aboriginal communities within a safe learning environment to discuss the implications of these issues and government responses. This contributes to participant insight and understanding of Aboriginal health and well-being.

**Outcomes / Results:** In 2015, 90 health professionals and 265 health students participated. Everyone completes a post-evaluation that explores their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal issues, and how their learning applies within their role. Key themes from these evaluations include increased understanding and knowledge of: Aboriginal health and culture, communication skills, disparities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and how to advocate and educate others to support change.

**Take Home Message:** These findings are significant for health services and higher education institutions regarding their approach to the inclusion of Aboriginal experience and perspectives in cultural curriculum. There is a clear focus on the learning outcomes for the participants, but there is limited literature and evidence on the impact for Aboriginal staff to provide and facilitate cultural education. Additional research in this area can address significant gaps in our knowledge on the organizational, structural, and professional elements that may contribute to the well-being and resilience of Aboriginal cultural education facilitators.