“Our vision is to realise benefits to the health and well being of the rural community, rural health professionals and the state’s higher education sector.”

“Our guiding purpose is to investigate rural health issues and provide innovative evidence-based research and learning for rural practice.”
Purpose

The University Department of Rural Health Tasmania (UDRH-Tas) has developed its goals and strategies, its business and operational programs in awareness of the National UDRH Program Objectives as defined by the Australian Government. The further articulation of these objectives, in the Key Performance Indicators, has also been considered in the development of the relevant plans that follow. The University of Tasmania Plan 2005–2007 complements the goals and strategies developed and so has been utilised as a guiding tool for the UDRH plans.

Since its inception in 1997, the University Department of Rural Health Tasmania has been striving to provide a positive and rich experience for health discipline students studying, or on placement, in rural and remote Tasmania. Additionally UDRH-Tas staff, mindful of the Purpose and Mission of the department, have consistently strived to undertake high quality rural and remote health research. Workforce and Health Service Systems continue to be the focal points for activity. UDRH-Tas has developed its range of activities to assist communities and collaborating stakeholders to further expand their capacity, as well as increase the capabilities and skills of its staff, ever cognisant of the needs, policies and programs of all three levels of government in Australia and rural private and community sector organisations.

The UDRH-Tas Strategic Plan has been generated by UDRH-Tas staff for the period 2008–2011 to provide a focal point for maintenance of past successes and current goals. A number of broad strategies have been singled out as important areas of attention. These are:

- Community engagement;
- Working with Schools of the University of Tasmania with regard to rural education for rural practice;
- Multidisciplinary and inter-organisational collaboration;
- That “evidence-based research and learning” meet standards of state, national and international evidence-based research and practice;
- Fostering links between research, practice and policy through:
  - Dialogue,
  - Priority research, and
  - Wide dissemination;
- Research that builds upon evidence;
- Seeking external funding sources to support expanded activities;
- Encouraging and supporting staff professional development.

Mission

The multidisciplinary University Department of Rural Health Tasmania is committed to improving access to healthcare resources and contributing to improved health outcomes for people in rural and remote areas of Tasmania by:

- Working collaboratively to achieve an adequate, appropriately trained and stable rural healthcare workforce;

- Facilitating access to appropriate education and training opportunities, resources and on-going support across the learning continuum;

- Promoting and supporting a primary health care approach to rural health research and preventative health strategies.
Operating Environment

- The University Department of Rural Health Tasmania was established in 1997 under the Regional Health Strategy of the Australian Department of Health and Ageing. The UDRH-Tas is one of eleven University Departments of Rural Health established around Australia and links to these other Departments through its membership of the Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN).

- The University Departments of Rural Health program encourages students of medicine, nursing and other health professions to pursue a career in rural practice by providing opportunities for students to practise their clinical skills in a rural environment. It also supports health professionals currently practising in rural settings. ¹

- The UDRH-Tas is a Department within the Faculty of Health Science of the University of Tasmania (UTAS). The UDRH-Tas has a state-wide focus and has offices at Launceston and Hobart (with the main office located opposite the Launceston General Hospital) and a presence at the Mersey Community Hospital at Latrobe and the Cradle Coast campus. The UDRH-Tas has a network of 14 Rural Health Teaching Sites (RHTS) of rural hospital and community-based learning environments dedicated to rural health teaching, learning and research, in particular supporting student placements.

- The UDRH-Tas collaborates with the other rural initiatives such as both the Rural Clinical School and the University of Tasmania more broadly, including Riawunna (the UTAS Centre for Aboriginal Education). Specifically the UDRH-Tas collaborates closely with the Tasmanian School of Nursing and Midwifery, the Medical Education Unit, and the Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy and Human Life Sciences. Additionally reach is extended with the School of Sociology and Social Work and the School of Psychology.

- The UDRH-Tas collaborates with state and local governments and non-government organisations including Divisions of General Practice and community-sector organisations across the state to develop and evaluate innovative models of care, and to foster health research. The main areas of research and interest are in Health Services Systems, Mental Health and Workforce Development. There is a strong sense of, and commitment to, community engagement which is a guiding principal of our modus operandi.

Values and Ways of Working

The staff at the UDRH-Tas have identified the following as guiding principles for their daily interaction with each other and with those outside of the department. These values underpin the way by which we work. By following these guiding principles UDRH-Tas staff develop techniques that yield results in such areas as quality, safety, productivity, diversity, workplace behaviour and change leadership. It is understood that cultures are not born; they are created and they are products of the social environment. It is this understanding that drives the following guiding principles:

**Building knowledge** –
Through innovation, collaboration, challenging the norms, and working to our strengths and differences, in work and our other lives

**Enthusiasm** –
Showing passion, having the energy to execute ideas and bringing a positive attitude to all that we do

**Integrity** – Accepting accountability and responsibility for our actions by being self-aware and self-reflective whilst being committed, with the courage of our convictions

**Mutual respect** – By providing an environment of cultural safety and treating others with open-mindedness and acceptance which includes holding each other accountable and providing crucial but critical performance feedback

**Nurturing** – Through working as a team and being supportive of others within and outside our organisation

**Goals**
- To undertake powerfully connected research, policy and practice
- To develop innovative programs
- To foster and maintain collaborative relationships with rural communities
- To ensure strong links to rural communities, health workers and students
- To be sustainable within UTAS, with financial stability and a diverse funding base
- To be positioned as a centre of excellence
- To be acknowledged for its leadership in and contribution to Indigenous and multiprofessional health education
  - To facilitate Indigenous health and interprofessional practice through education and research

**Areas of Focus**
(activities that relate to on-going priority)
- Rural workforce recruitment, support and professional development
- Support for Faculty of Health Science undergraduates
- Rural placements and preceptorship/clinical supervision
- Indigenous health
- Primary health care
- Graduate programs
- Mental health
- The health lifespan from childhood to ageing
- Chronic disease prevention and management
- Community health, participation and volunteerism
National UDRH Objectives

(As defined by the Australian Government – Department of Health and Ageing)

The National UDRH Objectives are further articulated in the Key Result Areas that follow:

- Increase and improve rural experiences, including training to encourage cultural awareness and sensitivity to Indigenous health issues, for undergraduate students in the health professions;

- Expand educational opportunities relevant to rural and remote practice, in particular in relation to existing rural and remote health professionals and Indigenous students;

- Undertake research into rural and remote health issues, publication of papers and reports and applying for research grants and consultancies;

- Provide training and support for rural health professionals (including mentors, supervisors and preceptors), consumers and communities, including Indigenous communities;

- Contribute to innovation in education, research and service development through collaborations with universities, health services and professional and community organisations, including Indigenous communities;

- Embrace a strong public or population health focus; and contribute to the development of innovative service delivery models in rural and remote health;

- Endeavour to progress the rural health agenda within the medical and other health sciences faculties or departments to maximise the efficient use of resources provided for a range of rural health programs. These programs include, but are not limited to, the Rural Undergraduate Support and Coordination program, the Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development program and the Rural Clinical Schools program.
Key Result Areas
(As defined by the Australian Government – Department of Health and Ageing)

Key Result Area 1
Increase and improve rural experiences for health science students

Target: Demonstrate a commitment to increase and improve rural and remote experiences for health sciences students

Key Result Area 2
Expand educational opportunities that are relevant for rural and remote practice

Target: Demonstrate an expansion of educational opportunities relevant to rural and remote practice, in particular in relation to existing rural and remote health professionals and Indigenous students

Key Result Area 3
Undertake research and related activities in rural and remote health issues

Target: Demonstrate a commitment to undertaking research into rural and remote health issues, measured by the awarding of research and development grants and the number of publications and publicly available reports produced by UDRH staff and affiliated students during the period

Key Result Area 4
Support for rural health professionals, consumers and communities

Target: Demonstrate support for rural health professionals, consumers and communities by conducting development activities

Key Result Area 5
Contribute to innovation in education, research and service development through collaborations with universities, health services and professional and community organisations

Target: Demonstrate contribution to innovation in education, research and service development through collaborations with universities, health services and professional and community organisations

Key Result Area 6
Embrace a strong population or public health focus and contribute to the development of innovative service delivery models in rural and remote health

Target: Demonstrate a strong population health focus and contribute to the development of innovative service delivery models in rural and remote health
Funding Sources

as at 30 June 2008

The principal funding source for the UDRH continues to be the Australian Government Department of Health & Ageing (DoHA).

DoHA Program List:
- University Department of Rural Health program
- Pharmacy Academics at University Departments of Rural Health (PAUDRH)
- Mental Health Academics at University Departments of Rural Health (MHAUDRH)
- Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development program (PHCRED)

The UDRH-Tas seeks to extend its funding sources beyond the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. As a proportion of the total funds, External Managed Funds (that is those funds not supplied, or awarded, by the Department of Health and Ageing and the University of Tasmania) continues to grow annually.

The sourcing of non-Department of Health and Ageing income continues to be an important undertaking for staff. Diversification of income source is seen as integral to the on-going success of the UDRH and it has been so to date with the UDRH-Tas continuing to be successful in gaining income from other sources.
Banner Performance Indicators

**BPI 1** Maintaining or increasing community participation rates in collaborative endeavours towards total community wellbeing models

**BPI 2** Maintaining or increasing the number and range of activities that support rural health professionals along the professional development continuum

**BPI 3** Achieving increased Indigenous education opportunities and cultural safety activities

**BPI 4** Enhancing and expanding graduate student experience

**BPI 5** Maintaining or increasing the publication rate and dissemination of research outcomes

**BPI 6** Achieving consistently high research outcomes (by comparison to the reported national UDRH Program output average)

**BPI 7** Maintaining or increasing the participation rate of health practitioners in research and education development activities

**BPI 8** Improving the rural and/or remote placement experience for supported students

**BPI 9** Increasing the number and rate of activities with other university departments/schools, in particular collaborative endeavours with the Tasmanian Rural Clinical School (RCS), Rural Undergraduate Support and Coordination program (RUSC) and the Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development program (PHCREd)

**BPI 10** Providing professional development for all staff

**BPI 11** Increasing the proportion of operating income from non-Department of Health and Ageing sources
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPI 1</th>
<th>Number of quality, relevant professional development and continuing education, seminars and workshops</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPI 2</td>
<td>Number of students in health profession courses exposed to rural curriculum content</td>
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<td>OPI 3</td>
<td>Graduate coursework student enrolments and number of completions, as well as number of units offered</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPI 4</td>
<td>Extent to which rural focussed curriculum design elements have been included in new and/or reviewed curricula</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPI 5</td>
<td>Number of activities and number of students receiving Indigenous and cultural awareness education</td>
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<td>OPI 6</td>
<td>Number of graduate research student enrolments and number of completions</td>
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<td>OPI 7</td>
<td>Number of publications, poster presentations, reports (peer-reviewed as a subset)</td>
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<td>OPI 8</td>
<td>Number of research consultancies, evaluations and grants (competitive as a subset)</td>
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<td>OPI 9</td>
<td>Extent to which there has been a contribution to the development of community innovative service delivery models</td>
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<td>OPI 10</td>
<td>Number of participants supported, and level of satisfaction, for professional development activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPI 11</td>
<td>Number of staff participating in staff development activities and total number of activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPI 12</td>
<td>Number of collaborative endeavours, in particular those related to strategic alliances and further funding opportunities</td>
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<td>OPI 13</td>
<td>Number of letters of agreement and/or collaboration with community, and intra- and inter-university bodies</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPI 14</td>
<td>Community engagement indicators including resources used, sharing of facilities and number of community events</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPI 15</td>
<td>Number and extent of impact statements collected</td>
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| OPI 16 | Income generated through:  
- Tender/consultancy submissions  
- Competitive and non-competitive research grants  
- Educational activities |
The University Department of Rural Health Tasmania has a network of 14 rural hospital and community-based learning environments dedicated to rural health teaching, learning and research.
University Department of Rural Health, Tasmania

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