

# SARRAH

Services for Australian  
Rural and Remote Allied Health

**Media Release**

14 September 2022

## **CEO RE-APPOINTMENT A POSITIVE FOR RURAL ALLIED HEALTH WHEN CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACHES, EXPERTISE AND REFORM ARE NEEDED**

Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH), the peak body for allied health professionals working in rural and remote Australia, is pleased to announce SARRAH CEO, Cath Maloney, has been re-appointed for a further three years.

SARRAH president, Dr Ed Johnson, said “I am pleased to announce Cath Maloney will continue to lead SARRAH for a further three years. Cath’s re-appointment reinforces the stability and expertise SARRAH brings to our work to improve access to allied health services for the 7 million people living in rural and remote Australia. We are well placed to represent our members and advocate for much needed health, disability, aged care and other services for rural and remote Australians.”

Ms Maloney said she was delighted to have been reappointed and proud of what SARRAH has accomplished over the past three years. “SARRAH is implementing a nationally significant workforce development project that is growing the number of allied health rural generalists – physiotherapists, speech pathologists, psychologists and the like - delivering primary care services across rural and remote Australia. We are also working to increase the reach and capacity of allied health professionals by developing the assistant workforce needed to support them. Both of these projects – funded by the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care - are providing much-needed infrastructure and training supports to service providers working in areas where the need is greatest.”

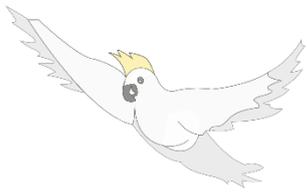
“These projects represent a welcome investment by the Commonwealth government to grow a fit-for-purpose and culturally appropriate rural health workforce. This investment is appreciated, but much more is needed to meet the growing demand for allied health services in disability and aged care, particularly for rural and remote communities who struggle to access these critical services” Cath said.

Strong, well-informed leadership and advocacy is especially important now. Governments nationally, health professionals, community leaders and consumers all agree our critical service systems need urgent reform to meet contemporary and emerging population needs. Priorities identified in National Cabinet and at the National Jobs and Skills Summit are shining a light on issues that should have been national priorities but have lacked attention too long.

“We need health and social service systems that give equitable and timely access to care for people living in rural and remote Australia,” said Dr Johnson. “We simply can’t afford for investments to be fragmented, short-term or reactive. Planned, coordinated and reliably-funded workforce and service development is needed so that communities can achieve optimal health and wellbeing”.

**Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health**

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Cath explained further: “People in rural and remote communities can wait months or in some cases years for services they, their children or aged parents need now. If a child with developmental issues cannot access timely services before they reach school-age, they may continue to fall behind their peers, with potentially life-long consequences”, Cath said. “Too often, rural communities can’t get the care they need through the health system, through aged care or the NDIS. That’s why SARRAH exists and why we are doing this work.”

Addressing these issues has been SARRAH’s priority for around 27 years. Unfortunately, the need today is as real as when grassroots allied health professionals across rural and remote Australia decided to do something about it and established SARRAH. “With the consistent, strong leadership that Cath brings to SARRAH”, said Dr Johnson, “the Board is confident that we’ll continue to play our part.”

### **Please direct enquiries to Dr Ed Johnson, President SARRAH**

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SARRAH is the peak body representing rural and remote allied health professionals (AHPs) working in public, private and/or community settings SARRAH advocates on behalf of rural and remote Australian communities. SARRAH maintains that every Australian should have access to health services wherever they live, and the allied health services are fundamental to the well-being of all Australians.

<https://www.sarrah.org.au/>