

RURAL AND
REMOTE
HANDBOOK

EXPERIENCE THE

OUTBACK

Sustain  Health

EASY TO FIND

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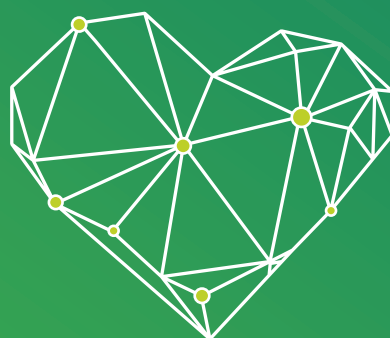
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WELCOME

HELLO AND WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF SUSTAINHEALTH!

It is our pleasure to welcome you to our team as a regional, rural or remote health or wellbeing professional.

We are here to support you on your journey in any way that we can. We put together this orientation guide to help with the most frequently asked questions we receive from our health and wellbeing contractors.

We love to hear from you while you're out on your placements, do not hesitate to contact your specialist consultant at any time. You can also connect with us through our social media networks by sharing your photos and stories!

We look forward to hearing your feedback throughout your SustainHealth contact and wish you a safe and exciting adventure!

EXCITING TIMES AHEAD!

Thanks,



Kay Reynoldson

Founder and Director

P.S. Did you know you can request a copy of our **Fixed Term and Locum Handbook** for more information about the contracts and services we offer. Just ask your consultant and we will send you a copy today!



GETTING STARTED

Rural, regional or remote work is extremely rewarding and there are no set rules as to what to expect from your experience. Every cultural group and community is different.

The key is understanding each culture and being able to deliver a culturally appropriate health service in your particular town or community.

We advise that you:



BE RESPECTFUL



**BE OBSERVANT
AND WILLING TO LEARN**



ASK FOR ADVICE

When you first arrive in a new healthcare setting and in particular, in Aboriginal communities, it's important to be aware that you are making positive first impressions immediately. These first impressions can determine both your satisfaction in your placement, the satisfaction of the communities you are working with and impact the health outcomes in the community. If you require any help or advice regarding how to work with or interact with your community, please talk to your line manager or one of our SustainHealth specialist consultants.



KEY INFORMATION

PERMITS



If you want to visit, drive through or work on Aboriginal land in particular states or territories, by law, you may need to obtain a permit. Permits are generally obtained from the local land council. Permits do not allow visitors to fish, hunt or carry out commercial activities, including filming, on Aboriginal lands. There are occasions when permits are not granted or cancelled. This could be because of a death, funeral or a ceremony being conducted in the area.

SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL LAND



You may also hear about forbidden or sacred areas on your travels. These are spiritual and cultural places which link Aboriginal people to their cultural traditions and land. They may be places linked to ceremonial activity, such as men's and women's business or to spiritual beliefs. They may or may not be sign-posted. Accidentally or intentionally entering such areas will offend Aboriginal people in the area and may even result in your immediate removal from the community. Please be mindful and also ask questions if you are unsure.

ALCOHOL



Many Aboriginal communities and bush camps are dry, meaning that alcohol is prohibited. These laws are enforced strictly. Some communities may have a permit system where residents can apply to have a nominated amount of alcohol with them in the community area. Other communities may have restrictions on availability of takeaway alcohol from clubs and pubs. It is strongly recommended that you do not bring alcohol with you into the community to ensure you do not breach any laws that may be in place. Once you have arrived and are familiar with the particular restrictions applicable in that area you can then act accordingly.

SHOPPING AND FOOD



Depending on your location, you may or may not have a local store or supermarket available to you. It is always best to ask your SustainHealth specialist consultant or new line manager what facilities are available in your placement location. If you have



any dietary requirements and require specific foods that might not be available in the community or town where you will be working, it is best to prepare and take a stockpile of these foods with you.

FUEL AND ROADS



Again, depending on your location, you may or may not have access to fuel or petrol stations and certain roads maybe closed or you may require a 4-wheel drive vehicle to access the location. It is always best to ask your SustainHealth specialist consultant or new line manager about travel and fuel options in your new temporary home. Be sure that you know the closest town where you can refuel. Also, check with locals regarding access to roads and tracks. Before you travel, check the weather because heavy rain can affect road and air routes to certain locations.

PHONE AND INTERNET CONNECTIONS



The more remote your placement, the more difficult phone and Internet access may be. We always recommend that you get a Telstra pay and go sim as a backup if your current provider has limited signal. Most medical or wellness clinics and Health Services have good access to the phone and internet, so speak to your manager about how and when you can access these services. If they are available, there will likely be a code of conduct linked to using the equipment. Your accommodation will most likely have both internet and phone signal, but if in doubt, remember to ask this question when you do your interview or check in with your specialist consultant for further clarification.

POSTAL, BANKING AND ATM SERVICES



Most towns and communities will have either a bank, EFTPOS or ATM service available. It is advised that you take some cash with you in the instance that there is a power issue in the area. Postal services are also readily available in most towns. If you are working in an extremely remote location, please make sure you check access with your new line manager, as you may need to seek access to specific services in neighbouring towns.



ESSENTIAL ITEMS TO PACK

PERSONAL REQUIREMENTS

Including food items, prescription medication or specific luxuries (e.g. specific laundry detergent or bedding items)



CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

Appropriate for the weather and enough to last for the duration of your journey.

PERSONAL TOILETRIES



BACK UP TELSTRA SIM CARD

In case of emergencies, for your phone.

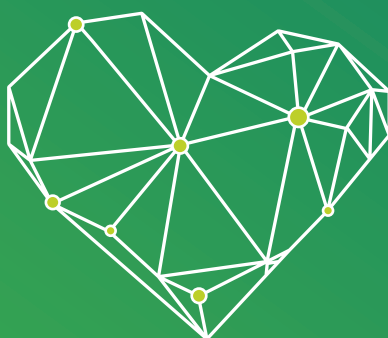
POWER CORDS

For any appliances or electronics you are taking with you (phone chargers or laptop chargers, for example)



MONEY

Enough for groceries, personal needs and emergencies. Most communities have ATM's and credit card facilities, but try to check the specific details for the community where you will be located before you travel.



WHAT TO WEAR

The community or health service that you are working with may have certain expectations about the way you should dress. As a medical or wellness health professional, they may expect you will dress in a way that reflects your role and status in the community. Work with your SustainHealth specialist consultant or line manager to determine what the most appropriate dress is for your work.

The dress code is particularly important when meeting or treating older members of the community and being in company of members of the opposite sex.

Dressing inappropriately can result in community members passing comments or complaints.

ACCEPTABLE APPAREL



SKIRTS AND DRESSES
below the knee, not above



**BLOUSES, SHIRTS AND
TOPS WITH SLEEVES**



LOOSE TROUSERS



**LOOSE FITTING
UNIFORM**



**COMFORTABLE,
ENCLOSED SHOES**



**SCRUBS OR
PROVIDED UNIFORM**

UNACCEPTABLE APPAREL



SHORT SKIRTS
above the knee



SLEEVELESS TOPS



TIGHT-FITTING SHORTS



**TIGHT-FITTING OR
VERY CASUAL JEANS**



THONGS OR FLIP FLOPS



STAY SAFE

Your safety is paramount and we advise that you take your personal safety and security as seriously as you would anywhere else. Some top tips for stay safe in regional, rural and remote locations include:



ASK FOR ADVICE

Ask for advice on safe routes and places to walk



BE AWARE OF DOGS

Be careful of dogs, but also be respectful of dogs as they are often an integral part of family life.



BE CAREFUL AT NIGHT

Be careful moving around the community at night, due to the lack of light.



INFORM OTHERS

Always let other people know where you are going and carry a phone with you.



EXPECTATIONS AND PROTOCOL IN YOUR COMMUNITY

SOME GENERAL TIPS ON CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS INCLUDE:



DO treat people gently, both physically and emotionally.

DO greet people respectfully and speak softly.

DO act politely and demonstrate an interest in people and the community through recognition - a smile, a wave, a small sign.

DO conduct your private life in a discreet manner.

DO observe others when communicating and take their lead, particularly regarding shaking hands and eye contact.

DO ask for advice in any given situation where you are unsure of what to do or how to act - people will always be happy to teach you.



DO NOT be impatient or raise your voice with anybody - particularly older people or children.

DO NOT speak harshly to someone that is drunk - speak to them in the same manner you would a sober person.

DO NOT bad mouth or enter into gossip about anyone in the community.

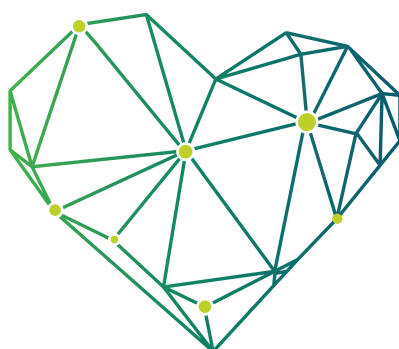
DO NOT swear around anyone in the community.

DO NOT drink alcohol in alcohol-free (dry) areas.

DO NOT take illegal drugs.

DO NOT eat in front of others if they are not eating.

DO NOT assume that you know everything. Aboriginal people are not fond of people who talk too much about their assumed knowledge and try to 'big note' themselves, particularly in regards to assumed kin.



CULTURAL AWARENESS

ELDERS (E)

Elders are people within the Aboriginal community who have earned status within that community for their knowledge and experience. Elders are to be shown total respect. Old age is considered to be the time for wisdom. Children often go to older people for advice, comfort, affection or story telling. Elders have a very important role in traditional and contemporary Aboriginal families. They are often the key decision makers. They teach important traditional skills and customs, pass on knowledge and share personal stories. When working with elders it is important to dress appropriately and use respectful terms of reference. As a health professional, it is helpful for you to have contact with elders in the community, as they can provide you with useful advice and guidance in many matters.

KINSHIP (K)

Aboriginal kinship and family structures are very important in Aboriginal culture, binding people together in all parts of Australia. They provide psychological and emotional support to each other. Aboriginal family obligations may be reflecting cultural values, involving kinship responsibilities. You may find there are particular rules of social relationships and hierarchies within the Kinship systems, including very specific rules and rituals of contact and engagement such as “no room” policies’, skin and right sink relationships or avoidance relationships. There may also be certain eye contact and body language rules which are strictly followed at all times by the Aboriginal communities. It is best to be sure that you learn as much about the community you are working in from other senior colleagues or Aboriginal Health Workers.

PREGNANCY AND BIRTH (P)

Traditional Aboriginal culture dictates that births are to happen at a specific birthing location. However, today many Aboriginal births occur in hospital. There have also been a number of developments in terms of providing more traditional practices within a medical environment. There can be some tension regarding the decision to either have the baby in hospital or at home in the community. Pregnancy and birth are generally not to be discussed with the male partner of a female client. In the event of a medical emergency that may involve a woman being evacuated to hospital, the medical condition can be discussed, but not the actual pregnancy. Ask the Aboriginal health worker either to contact the relevant females within the kinship network or advise you on what is



acceptable procedure. If available, the sister, grandmother, cousin or aunt is the best person to provide you with the necessary guidance and advice.

If there is a serious, life-threatening event, protocols can be breached and professional services given. It's important to remember that Aboriginal women should be attended by female midwives and traditionally, men are never present at the birth of a child. After the birth, the mother and baby return to the community where both may attend a smoking ceremony for strength, health and spiritual celebration. Often the mother returns to routine life when the child's umbilical cord has dropped off.

CHILDHOOD

C

Childhood is celebrated and cherished in Aboriginal culture. A child is a gift to the entire kinship network and is highly valued. Children are given constant affection and child-rearing is shared by all those who have a responsibility to the child within the kinship network. Each of these people has their specific role, which is essential to healthy child rearing. Gaining a basic understanding of these roles can help you in your clinical practice, as the biological mother and father may not always be the primary care giver to that child.

LANGUAGE

L

Many different languages and dialects are spoken throughout regional, rural and remote communities in Australia. Different Aboriginal cultures and languages have specific kinship rules attached to them, so if in doubt, please seek advice from your colleges or appropriate community leader.

EYE CONTACT

E

In some communities, eye contact may be inappropriate and avoiding eye contact can be a sign of respect. Observe others and take their lead. Take care to avoid staring at someone, particularly of the opposite sex. Look past the person, as opposed to directly at them, to avoid making them feel uncomfortable.

DEATH AND DYING

D

Giving a diagnosis of a serious, terminal illness can be difficult in situations involving Aboriginal clients and their families. Health professionals have reported difficulties, including Aboriginal understanding of terminal illness and reluctance on behalf of the client and their family to find out bad news. Many avoid seeking palliative support. Aboriginal health workers may find it difficult to talk to a client about the fact that they are dying. As a non-Aboriginal health professional, you need to talk honestly and firmly



with the client and their family about what is happening and ensure the information is understood.

Many Aboriginal people feel strongly about their place of death and who cares for them. Many Aboriginal people prefer to go home to die rather than die in hospital.

When a death occurs in the Aboriginal community, the person is generally referred to as having passed away. Passing away conveys the images of going through, not to return and going on a journey. The name of the deceased is now not to be used. The name can be written down but not spoken.

“Sorry Business” is the time of mourning following the death of an Aboriginal person. The term “sorry business” is frequently connected to a death in the Aboriginal community.

“Sorry business” can vary in time from days to months, or in exceptional circumstances, years. During this time, sign language is often used as a means of communication between those grieving and the wider community. In some communities, the name of the deceased is never mentioned again. In others, it is not mentioned for a certain period of time. Pay close attention the community and observe others when dealing with this sensitive issue.



SUPPORT SERVICES

CRANAplus SERVICES

SustainHealth works closely with the **CRANAplus** Bush Support Services who offer a free counseling, advice and support for all health professionals working in regional, rural and remote Australia.

Contact them for free 24 hours a day

CRANAplus Bush Support Services

Telephone Counselling every day of the year **1800 805 391** or visit their website:

<https://crana.org.au/support>.

The service is to support **ALL** remote health workers, service providers and their families.



FAQ'S: BE IN THE KNOW



1. WORKING FOR SUSTAINHEALTH IN REGIONAL, RURAL OR REMOTE LOCATIONS

At SustainHealth, we are specialists in providing health and wellbeing practitioners to regional, rural and remote communities Australia wide.

We can help you find a permanent fixed term or locum position, whilst you enjoy an unforgettable and unique experience on your Australian working holiday.



2. WHY WORK REGIONAL, RURAL OR REMOTE CONTRACTS?

Take a working holiday in your own back garden! Enjoy the best of what Australia has to offer, whilst enhancing your clinical skills, knowledge and experience.

Expand your geographical and social understanding of Australia and its vibrant communities.

Often our contracts include attractive incentives including:

Subsidised travel

Free or reduced cost accommodation

Rural and remote living allowances

Enhanced salary and top up bonus opportunities



3. HOW CAN SUSTAINHEALTH HELP YOU?

We can offer advice and support to help you coordinate your relocation.

SustainHealth has short and long-term roles, so you can choose the right package for you.

We can arrange to extend your contract if you are happy where you are. However, if you want to continue your travels, just let us know and we will get your next contract booked so you can enjoy your trip, hassle free!



Support with booking and planning your travel and accommodation.

We can help you get the most out of your time in your new town, just ask your consultant for their top tips to get the most out of your experience!

You will receive ongoing support and regular contact from your specialist consultant. We will be in touch with you throughout your contact as much or as little as you would like.



4. WHERE DO SUSTAINHEALTH OFFER PLACEMENTS?

SustainHealth offers regional, rural and remote placements Australia wide. Whether you're looking to work in tropical coastal locations, regional towns or in the great outback, we have the role for you.



5. AM I ELIGIBLE FOR A SUSTAINHEALTH CONTRACT?

At SustainHealth we are specialists in health and wellbeing recruitment. We have contract positions in regional, rural and remote locations for all healthcare professionals, including but not limited to:

Registered Nurses and Midwives

Hospital Support and Administration Staff

Senior and Executive Health Services / Practice Managers

Allied Health Professionals, including: Physiotherapists, OT's, Dietitians, Podiatrists, Speech Pathologists, Audiologists

Dentists and Dental Nurses

Medical Imaging Professionals

Social Care, Mental Health and Disability Support Workers

Aged Care and Community Health Care professionals

Social Workers and Psychologists

All you have to do is let us know what you are looking for when you register with your specialist consultant and we will match your skills to one of our many positions.





6. HOW WILL I BE NOTIFIED ABOUT THE CONTRACTS SUSTAINHEALTH HAVE AVAILABLE?

We get new contract opportunities in every day, so be sure that you have registered your interest with us.

One of our dedicated specialist consultants will contact you within 24 hours to talk you through the contracts available to you. If you see a contract on one of our job mailouts that you would like to hear more about, please call or email your dedicated specialist consultant to find out more about the role.

At SustainHealth our consultants are extremely proactive, so keep an eye on your phone and email! If we find a contract that matches your skills, we will call you immediately to see if you are available to take on the placement.



7. HOW DO I SECURE MY SUSTAINHEALTH PLACEMENT?

When you register with your specialist consultant, we will check out your clinical skill-set and your level of experience. We will register your availability and your locations of interest.

Once we understand what you are looking for, we will match you to one of our clients and book you for a phone or video interview, if required. Some of our clients do not require you to interview. Your consultant will advise you on the process that is appropriate to you, depending on our client's needs.

To give yourself the optimal opportunity of securing a contract, it is key that you provide SustainHealth with your most up-to-date referee contact information, alongside any key compliance, competencies or any state specific documentation that we require.

It's also a great idea for you to regularly update your consultant with your movements and availability. Plus, if you have upskilled, let us know. It may open up a range of additional opportunities.





8. HOW LONG WILL MY PLACEMENT LAST?

Regional, Rural and Remote placements vary in length depending on the demand in the community or the needs of the health or wellbeing service.

At SustainHealth, we offer short-term roles, 7 days or less, all the way though to permanent opportunities.

We find that 13 to 26 weeks is our average contact placement length.

This means that you would not need to leave your full time role to take a SustainHealth contract.

Many of our contactors take rural placements when they are on leave or are taking a break from their day job. Call your specialist consultant to find out how our contract roles can fit around your needs.

Remember, once you're working on a placement, it's likely that our clients will be interested in extending your contract. We will be in regular contact with you to see what your availability looks like.



9. I HAVE BEEN OFFERED A PLACEMENT, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Congratulations on receiving your offer, this is the start of something very exciting!

The first step is to chat with your consultant to be sure that you have provided all the necessary compliance and supporting documentation.

Then, we will send you all the information you need via email. Your placement's information will outline the dates you will be required to work, as well as the location and any other key information that is specific to your contract.

All you have to do is confirm with your consultant via email that you are happy with the agreement and you're ready to go!



10. WHAT IF I CAN'T TAKE OR FINISH THE PLACEMENT?

We ask that if you think carefully before SustainHealth puts you forward for any of our contracts. It important that you are fully committed and your consultant will be happy to give you the time to think about the positions before you are submitted to our clients.



However, if for any reason, you have accepted a contract that you are unable to attend or complete, please let your consultant know immediately.



11. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE?

Regional health services are usually located in larger townships and surrounding areas.

They often have the provisions and resources to offer a broad range of healthcare services to their communities, including Rehab, ED, ICU and Mental Health Services. Our regional contracts offer a great level of support and infrastructure to our health and wellbeing specialist, whilst still offering an unique and exciting experience! For example, Bendigo in Victoria is one of the larger regional health services in Australia.

Rural health services will generally have an inpatient facility. However, the services are geographically more isolated than regional services and have smaller populations. The Murrumbidgee district in NSW is a great example of a rural health service.

Remote health services have minimal infrastructure and resources. Most serious health problems would need to be referred to larger regional hubs. Our remote health services are often small clinical and community settings that are extremely isolated. The APY lands in SA is classified as a remote health service.



12. HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO SECURE A PLACEMENT?

At SustainHealth, we pride ourselves in working quickly and efficiently to secure the most appropriate contract match to meet your needs. Depending on our clients need, the time frame for securing a contract can vary. Your consultant will keep you informed of your progress at all stages of the recruitment process.

Remember, the more information we have about your needs and providing the necessary compliance documentation for you will likely speed up the placement process.



13. WHAT ARE THE INCENTIVES AVAILABLE TO ME FOR WORK REGIONAL, RURAL OR REMOTE?

Our regional, rural, and remote placements all offer different bonuses and incentives. It depends on the client and community needs.



Some of our incentives include:

- Free or heavily subsidised accommodation
- Tax offsets and Government remote living allowances
- Free or subsidised travel, petrol allowances, or use of vehicles
- Training and development incentives
- Sign up and contract completion bonuses
- Additional leave allowances
- Additional salary incentives and bonuses

Each facility or community is different and your consultant will offer you specific information about the offers available to you on your placement.

SustainHealth will help you arrange your accommodation and travel. Your accommodation may be on site, in shared quarters or in a house or unit, which may also be shared with a private room. In general, meal and technology allowances are not covered, unless specified.



14. WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I REQUIRE TO BE CONSIDERED FOR A SUSTAINHEALTH CONTACT?

At first, all we need is your most up to date CV. One of our consultants will call you to talk through your suitability and contract options.

At SustainHealth, we take our responsibility to provide well-qualified and fully compliant health and wellbeing specialists to our clients very seriously.

After our initial discussion, you will receive an application pack listing the documents we will need from you. All we ask is that you return the documents to us as quickly as possible.

Compliance is a key and for different contracts, we may require:

- Most recent Referee information
- AHPRA or other registration number
- Visa if not an Australian citizen
- Competency or skills check
- 100 points of ID
- Working with children's check
- Current police check – within last 6 months
- Full immunisation record
- Overseas police check (if required)
- Occupational health check (if required)
- Hospital or health service compliance documentation (if required)





15. WHAT LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE DO I NEED TO BE CONSIDERED FOR A SUSTAINHEALTH CONTRACT?

We usually require candidate to have at least 2 years' experience. However, your specialist consultant will offer you further information regarding the exact requirements for the role you are interested in.



16. CAN I BRING ANYONE ALONG WITH ME TO MY SUSTAINHEALTH CONTRACT?

The short answer is yes, it is possible to bring along a partner, family member or pet on your contract. However, this can significantly reduce the placements that are available to you.

We advise that you chat to your consultant about your expectations and they will be happy to advise you of your options



17. WILL I NEED TO RESIGN FROM MY CURRENT POSITION TO TAKE A SUSTAINHEALTH CONTRACT?

No, not at all. As our contracts vary in length, many of our health and wellbeing specialists are able to work contracts whilst on their annual or long service leave or even take unpaid leave from their current employer. It may also be an option to switch to working casually for your current employer to give you the flexibility to travel and work across Australia.



18. WHAT DO I DO IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG OR I NEED HELP WHILE I'M ON A SUSTAINHEALTH CONTRACT?

In the first instance, we advise you to report any issues or concerns to your manager, team leader, or the relevant authorities. It's important for you to get urgent and onsite support and advice. We then suggest that you call, text, or email your specialist consultant. They will work to get back to you in a timely manner and offer any additional support that you require



ONE FINAL THOUGHT FROM SUSTAINHEALTH

Something for you to contemplate if you think
our team might be for you...

"IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, YOU'LL DO
WHAT'S CONVENIENT.
IF YOU'RE COMMITTED, YOU'LL DO
WHATEVER IT TAKES"

John Assara, USA



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

At SustainHealth we want to hear from you. We love to hear your feedback, the good, the bad and the brilliant. After each time we work with you, we will follow up.

It would be great if you could take some time out to fill out our short feedback survey. You can also call or email us and any time.

Contact Us

Kay Reynoldson

Founder and Director
Sustain Healthcare Recruitment

Level 8, 45 Clarence St
Sydney NSW 2000

Email us info@sustainhr.com.au

Call us on **0422 175 160 | 02 8274 4677**

Look Us Up



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