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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Pharmacy Students Rate Rural Clinical Placements as Important!

Eighty-five percent of respondents to the National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association (NAPSA) Rural and Indigenous Affairs Survey rated rural clinical placements as 'important' or 'very important'.

The survey attracted 414 responses from pharmacy students across Australia, and was conducted by NAPSA's Rural and Indigenous Affairs Committee. It sought information about pharmacy students' perceptions of rural clinical placements, working in rural areas, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health education component of their course curriculum.

Briohny Gillespie, the Chair of the Rural and Indigenous Affairs Committee says 'The level of interest, and the understanding of the importance of a rural placement is encouraging. We are aware that the profession faces challenges in attracting graduates and newly registered pharmacists to rural areas, but there are still barriers to students taking up rural placements. For example, financial concern was one of the most commonly identified barrier to these placements and yet only 50% of all respondents were aware of the financial assistance available to them.'

In relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health education being taught to pharmacy students, 83% of respondents felt that this topic was important to be taught as part of their pharmacy course curriculum, however only 60% have access to such education. Furthermore, only 50% of those particular respondents reported that, in their opinion, what they are taught in this area is sufficient.

'The survey did indicate however' Ms Gillespie said 'that current pharmacy students may be more inclined to make the move after working as a pharmacist for some time. It showed that 89% of respondents would consider employment in a regional, rural or remote setting at a later stage in their career'.

The full report can be found on the NAPSA website [www.napsa.org.au](http://www.napsa.org.au)

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