

Development of a regional palliative care nurse practitioner service

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Jade Odgers, a qualified Registered Nurse Division One, is the Manager of the Grampians Regional Palliative Care Team. Jade has completed a Graduate Diploma in Nursing Palliative and Psychology, Diploma of Project Management and Diploma of Business Management and is currently enrolled in her Masters of Nursing, Palliative Care. Jade has worked in palliative care for over 13 years, both in the Grampians Regional Palliative Care Team and at Gandarra Palliative Care Unit in an inpatient setting. She is passionate in providing equitable access to high-quality palliative care education across the Grampians region. Jade is the current chair of Clinical Group of the Grampians Palliative Care Consortium and is a member of the Victorian Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner Collaborative.

The Grampians Region Palliative Care Consortium appointed a project worker for 6 months to develop a palliative care nurse practitioner model. The aim of the project was to define the role and responsibilities of potential palliative care nurse practitioners within the region.

The project was overseen by the Grampians Region Palliative Care Consortium and the Community Programs Manager on behalf of Ballarat Health Services and the Grampians Regional Palliative Care Team.

Four areas that the project addressed were:

- 1 Understanding local demand and opportunities
 - Look at multiple service plans and needs analysis relating to local, regional and state-wide palliative care services
 - Look at DHS rural workforce planning
- 2 Shaping the service model for NPs
 - Prioritise areas for NP service development, including looking at complementing current services, extending services and address gaps
 - Determine benefits to stakeholders
 - How the service would be evaluated, monitored after implementation
- 3 Priming the organisation for NPs
 - Governance structures
 - Processes to engage stakeholders
 - Communication and marketing strategies
 - Budget modelling
- 4 Preparing the nursing workforce
 - Identify staff who have expressed interest in NP role
 - Map potential NP's current education against NBV requirements and map needs
 - Look at candidacy model and means of meeting the needs of candidates

Through these activities the challenges faced in developing innovative health care initiatives within rural areas of Victoria was acknowledged. Specifically issues with the sharing of resources between numerous smaller rural health services was identified. Strategies were developed to facilitate the implementation of a palliative care NP model that was truly collaborative and responsive to the needs of the community.