



NATIONAL RURAL
HEALTH
ALLIANCE INC.



13TH NATIONAL RURAL
HEALTH CONFERENCE
24-27 May 2015, Darwin Convention Centre, NT

Des Murray Scholarship 2015

The Des Murray Scholarship was established by the NRHA in 2000 to recognise Des Murray's major contribution to the rural and remote health community, and as a reminder of the man and his work. Des was for many years a key player at Commonwealth level in the development and administration of rural health policies in Australia. He then worked for the NRHA and continued to devote himself to improving health and wellbeing in rural and remote areas. Des Murray was a friend to many and much admired.

The Scholarship is awarded every second year to enable a young person from a more remote area to attend the National Rural Health Conference. In 2015 the Scholarship will cover the cost of registration, airfare and accommodation for the 13th National Rural Health Conference in Darwin, 24-27 May.

The successful nominee will be:

1. a younger person from a more remote area (broadly speaking, a place smaller than 7,000);
2. a person committed to improving the health status of people in his/her region;
3. a person who would not otherwise be able to attend the Conference; and
4. a person who has demonstrated the ability to be an advocate for the young people of his/her region.

Nominees are sought from Members of Council of the NRHA and the Friends Advisory Committee, using the attached Application Form. Nominations will close on Monday 23 February 2015.

Who was Des Murray?

Des Murray, who passed away in June 1999, was a pioneer of public service work on rural and remote health. Des was a gentle and compassionate person who enjoyed extending a helping hand to people in country areas who devote energy and commitment to improving their own situation. Des' calm and organised contributions to work on rural health issues stand in marked and ironic contrast to the personal turmoil and anxiety which he bore for the latter part of his life.



Des Murray had a long career in the Australian Public Service, including stints in the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Brisbane and in a number of areas of the Commonwealth Department of Health.

In his capacity as Director of Rural Health and Workforce Support, he was a key player from the early 1990s in the establishment of the RHSET Program, of the biennial National Rural Health Conferences, the establishment and consolidation of Rural Health Training Units, the formation of the Australian Rural Health Research Institute and of a number of related initiatives. Des was also one of the key public servants involved with the National Rural Health Alliance in its formative years.

Des had a strong belief in the importance of teamwork among health professionals. Des retired from the Department in 1995. This allowed him a greater amount of time for his wife, Mary, to whom Des was extraordinarily and publicly devoted, and for his golf, reading and other family and personal pursuits.

Des began work for the National Rural Health Alliance in September 1996 and was the central person in the Alliance's organisation and management of the 4th National Rural Health Conference. In his work in the Alliance Office Des was warm, supportive and genial. His work was characterised by an extraordinary level of care and meticulous attention to detail. The 4th Conference in Perth, February 1997, was a success due in large part to Des' work.

He then stayed on with the Alliance and organised the National Rural Public Health Forum held in Adelaide in October 1997. Des had the ability to make those who approached the organisation feel welcome and to respond carefully and compassionately to requests for information. The Rural Public Health Forum was the first Conference of its kind in Australia and was a great success. Des enjoyed in particular the sense of being able to publicise and support a number of self-help initiatives in rural and remote areas, and to be able to celebrate the positive future that they showed was possible.

Des had a balanced but positive view of the future of rural, regional and remote areas of Australia. The Scholarship bearing his name is a reminder of his nature and of the great contribution he made.