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Rural and isolated nurses in Queensland Australia- Navigating transitional change between state and national based nursing governance to provide improved accessibility to universal healthcare through collective professional activism

Queensland is Australia's most geographically decentralised state with regional centres located throughout, as well as many isolated communities. The Rural and Isolated Practice Endorsed Nurse (RIPEN) is particularly effective in this environment providing emergency and primary healthcare, working in rural hospitals, mining sites, indigenous communities, tourist resorts, remote pastoral stations where onsite access to medical practitioners and/or nurse practitioners is by visit only or not available at all and to rural and remote area emergency sites. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia has advised the RIPEN endorsement for scheduled medicines for registered nurses to supply under protocol will be discontinued, once reliant states and territories have developed and implemented viable alternatives. The Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union (QNMU) has a long history of collective professional activism by members to achieve improved working conditions. This presentation will describe the collective professional activism initiatives undertaken by QNMU RIPEN members to maintain access and coverage of health services. This will include navigation through negotiations with key stakeholders across state and national jurisdictions to achieve a viable alternative to the RIPEN model of care for people living in rural and isolated communities in Queensland.

Purpose:

- To ensure that RIPENs continue to be able to supply under protocol to the same extent as they currently do
- To communicate the proposed new arrangements
- To reassert that there is commitment to ensuring that rural and isolated communities have quality access to medicines



Biography

Denise Breadsell qualified as a Registered Nurse in Queensland in 1982 and a Registered Midwife in Queensland in 1985 and has gained a breadth of experience in nursing and midwifery across rural, remote and urban areas. She has worked across public, private and aged care sectors, predominantly in Queensland, Australia during the past 40 years. Her areas of practice have included; Public Health Nurse – Communicable Diseases/Immunization, Sexual and Reproductive Health Nurse, Midwifery, Infection Control, Tuberculosis management, Refugee and Indigenous Health, Quality Management, Nurse Education, Operating Theatre, School Based Youth Health Nurse and Orthopedics, before starting work with the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union (QNMU) 5 years ago as a Professional Officer responsible for codes and standards of practice. She has obtained tertiary qualifications including; a degree in Health Science Nursing Southern Cross University; a Graduate Certificate Infection Control Griffith University, a Masters in Public Health Newcastle University.

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