

# MyPlacement Project

Exploring student experiences of rural clinical placements

Three Rivers University Department of Rural Health supports university-based health professions students across our geographic footprint to have professionally and personally rewarding rural clinical placements. We offer scholarships, affordable accommodation and educational support and resources.

Since September 2018, we've been asking these students to participate in an online survey to tell us about their placement experiences in areas outside of the major cities.

The report summaries key findings describing students' experiences of 268 rural clinical placements up to May 2020.

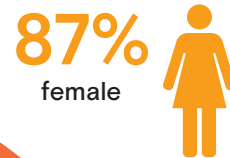
**15%** aged under 21 years

**53%** aged 22-30 years

**32%** aged over 30 years



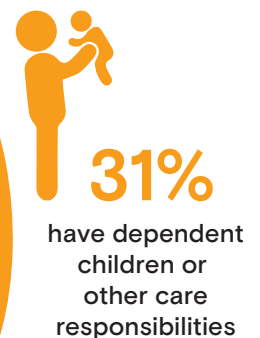
born in Australia



**4 out of 5** students (80%) reported working while they are studying.



**1 out of 4** students (24%) reported working 30 or more hours per week.



from nursing and midwifery **62%**

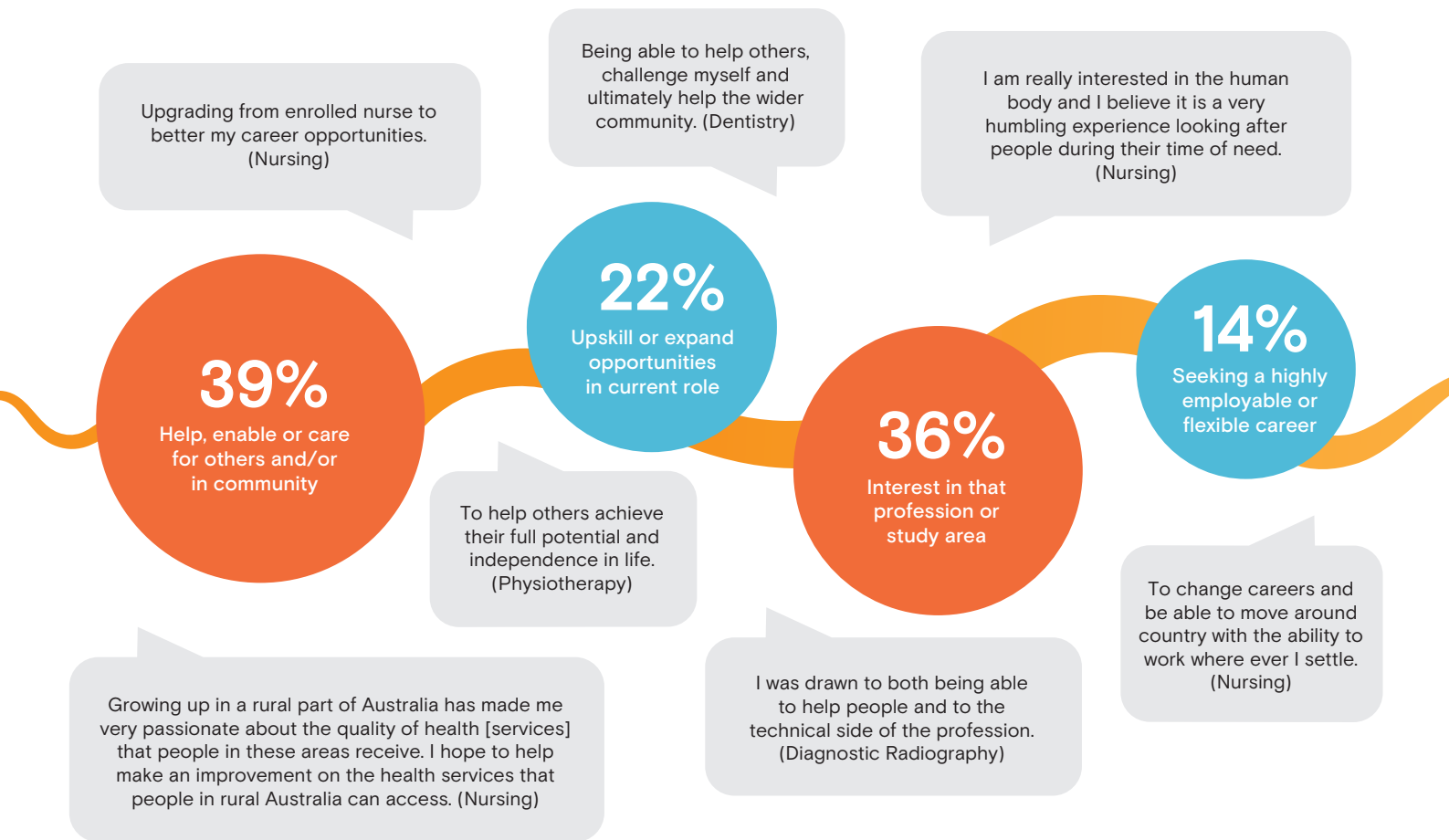
from dentistry and oral health **3%**

from allied health **35%**

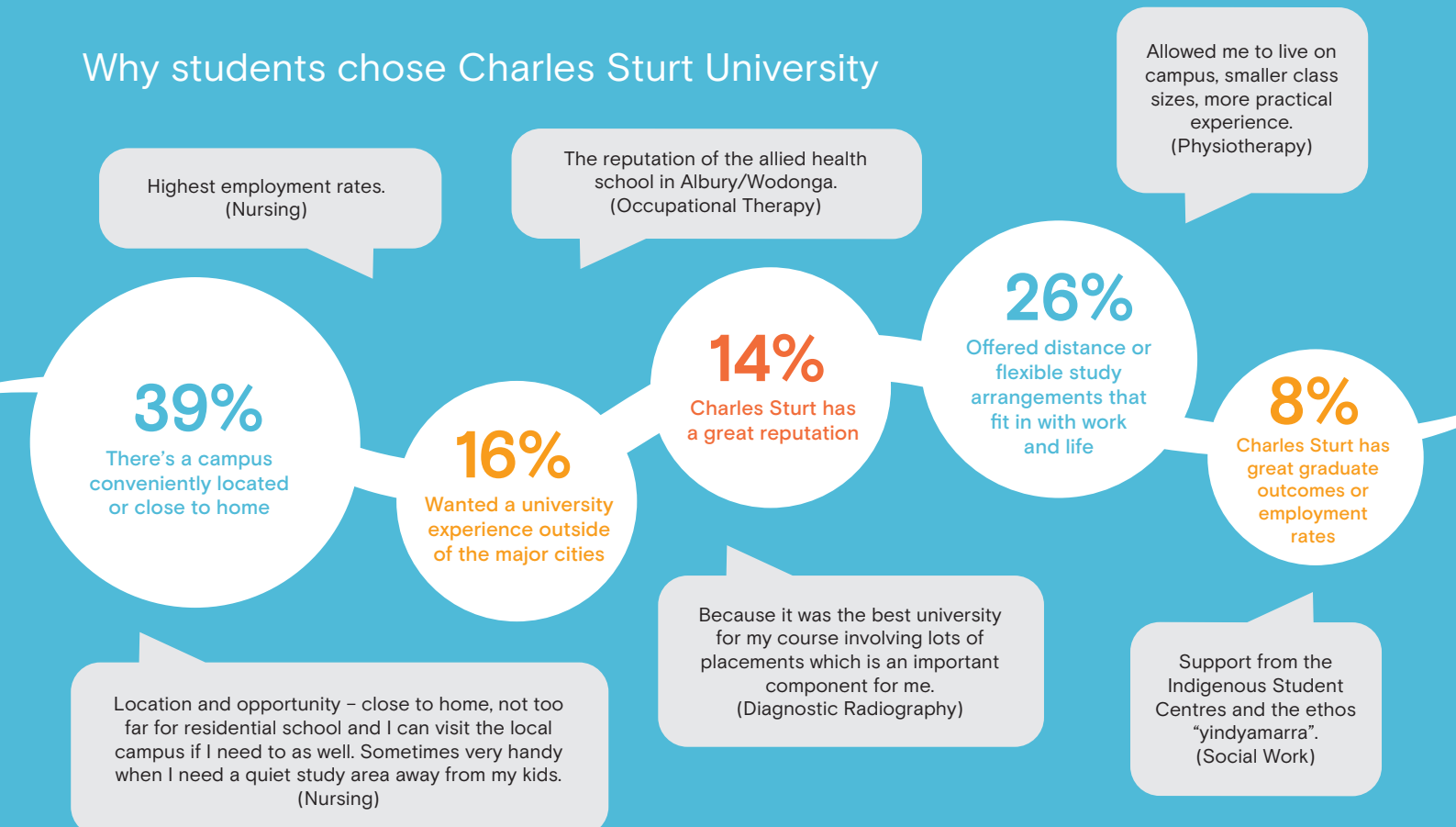
## Who participated in the survey?

Students came from a broad range of disciplines, including: dentistry, exercise physiology, medical radiation sciences, medical science, medicine, midwifery, nursing, nutrition and dietetics, occupational therapy, oral health, paramedicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy, psychology, speech pathology, and social work.

## Why Charles Sturt students chose their course

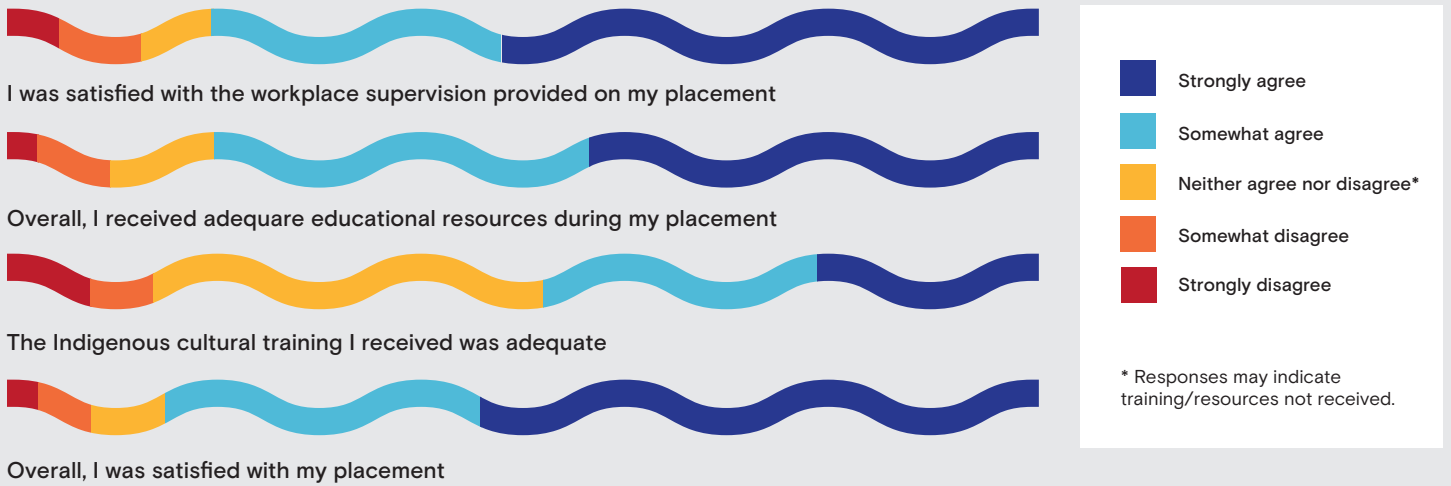


## Why students chose Charles Sturt University



\* Yindyamarra is a word from the Wiradjuri language meaning 'respect, be gentle, be polite and do slowly'.

## How students rated their placement experiences and support

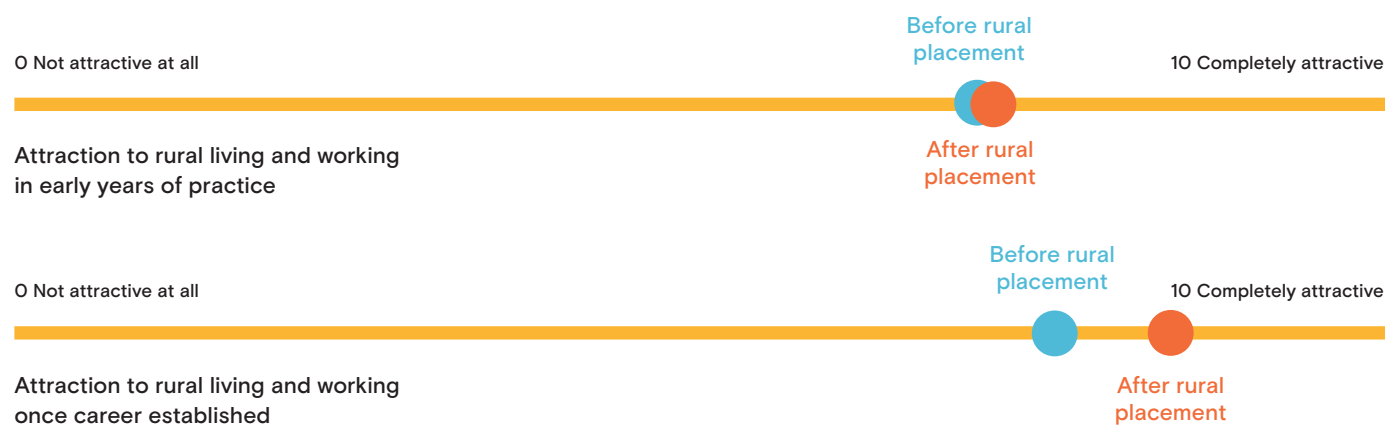


## What students liked about their placements



## Attraction to rural practice

On average, students rated their attraction to mid-career rural living and working significantly higher after their placement. There was no difference found in students' ratings when asked to consider their early years of practice.



## Summary

- These findings provide important insights into rural placement experiences among students and are informing Three Rivers' activities to promote positive rural clinical placements.
- Overall, students report that their rural placements offer valuable opportunities for developing skills and confidence in clinical care.
- Against a backdrop of declining availability of some rural health services, there are concerns among students that this is impacting on the quality of learning experiences during clinical placements.
- While completing unpaid clinical placements presents a financial strain for many students, these may be particularly acute for those who are carers and family breadwinners. These students may benefit from a wider array of practical and financial support than are currently available.

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## Acknowledgements

Associate Professor Gene Hodgins, Professor Megan Smith, Brent Smith and Vanessa Bland made important contributions in establishing this project. We are also grateful for the support of Three Rivers' Clinical Educators and Workplace Learning teams across Charles Sturt University.

Extra special thanks to the students who are taking the time to provide thoughtful insights into their placement experiences.

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*Three Rivers University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) is part of Charles Sturt University. It leads the consortium partnership with The University of Notre Dame, University of New South Wales and Western Sydney University. Three Rivers UDRH aims to improve the recruitment and retention of nursing, midwifery, allied health and dentistry professionals in rural and remote Australia; and is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program. We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the country on which we work and learn together. We commit to building relationships and sharing culture with Aboriginal peoples.*