

# Rural Generalist Pathway

<b>Name</b>	Joseph Turner
<b>Post Graduate Year</b>	6
<b>Position Title</b>	Lead Doctor – Survivor
<b>Location</b>	Philippines
<b>Advanced Skill</b>	Emergency Medicine

For the last four months I've been heading up a team of doctors, nurses and paramedics working at multiple remote construction and filming locations simultaneously. We operate a primary care clinic and 24hr oncall service. Prior to this I worked in Charleville as a Rural Generalist Senior Medical Officer (Provisional Fellow).



In my current Survivor role, we see patients with conditions such as gastro; URTIs; ear infections; wound infections; construction injuries involving nails to feet and machetes to hands; broken bones; rashes; coral cuts; musculoskeletal injuries; and tropical diseases such as dengue fever. We occasionally have larger or more serious emergencies including anaphylaxis, acute abdomens, falls from heights, suspected spinal injuries, MVA/MBAs, and bites/envenomations.

I enjoy the crazy, different, exciting work in a spectacular location that I would not have been prepared for had I not undertaken Rural Generalist Training. I have enjoyed my steep learning curve in film-industry logistics, managing contestants, disaster and critical incident planning, pre-hospital care, and mixing with a group of very strong personalities. Some of the challenges I have faced include a lack of diagnostic facilities; remoteness and distance to referral facilities; language barriers; lack of range of medicine/antibiotics; and staff skill-mix.

My Rural Generalist Training (including my Emergency Medicine advanced skill) prepared me for handling emergency presentations. Subsequent time in remote hospital and general practice, including relieving in smaller towns, enabled me to develop the clinical skills necessary for practising in this very remote location.

The ACRRM curriculum has been particularly appropriate for training to work in an area with few resources and far away from a referral centre.

Furthermore, the support of senior Rural Generalists like Dr Chester Wilson in Charleville provided incredible inspiration in terms of the clinical experience and capabilities, teaching, and perspective that rural doctors like Chester possess. Chester also has a unique way of getting through the day and dealing with so many people and problems. I carry lessons from him with me every day, both in the clinic and in the world at large.

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and you'll find that getting there is half the fun*

I will never forget being in Charleville with the whole town gathered in the main street for the Christmas party. "Ned and the Kelly's" were playing on stage (Chester's bush-band) and everywhere there was happiness and warmth. So many people from rural areas say how they have to go into the city to see cultural events and yet here was some fair-dinkum Aussie culture that few city people would ever get a chance to experience!

I've overcome the social and professional isolation which can occur in rural practice by making use of the Procedural Grant to undertake formal upskilling courses. I also continue to read journal articles when possible.

Socially I play tennis and spend time with my wife. I really enjoy my current location and lifestyle; it's like living on a holiday resort with some interesting work on the side.

My advice to aspiring Rural Generalist Trainees is that there is such a breadth and depth to what is available in the country – you just have to work out what suits you. Make your opportunities and take them, and you'll find that getting there is half the fun.

